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COVER STORY



Pink hues and bold pops of colour create a cheerful feel in this five-bedroom Dutch townhouse (see page 56)



135



60

II



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RE PLANNED

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WELCOME

Every week *25 Beautiful Homes*' wonderful assistant, Sally, takes calls and emails from you, our readers. Last week she had an email that was not a query or a complaint but just a message from a reader simply telling us how much she enjoyed the magazine. Feedback such as this means more to the *25BH* team than that kind woman will ever realise. It reminded me that at the heart of the magazine is a committed and talented team. From Sally, who is always on hand to help our readers, to Emma and Seán, who have the enviable task of sourcing the beautiful homes that fill our pages every month. From an array of submissions, they choose the homes that will grace the pages of each issue and are worthy of our loyal readership. Very occasionally, when they're not in agreement about a certain house, Emma and Seán will ask me to be the casting judge, and I find it amusing that I can always tell which one is in favour of including the house and which one isn't. Their choice is based on the images supplied, but the story behind the homes we showcase are as important to us as they are to you. Equally important is how we translate these homes to the pages of the magazine, so I'd like to thank Paula and Mel, our talented art editors, and our subbing team Max, Jennie and Rachel for making sure that your stories come alive for all of our readers.

Deborah

DEBORAH BARKER, EDITOR IN CHIEF

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Traditional meets contemporary in this stunning new-build situated on the coast



BEAUTY IN ABUNDANCE

This 18th-century apartment's elegance is a throwback to the age of glamour



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MARCH

TRENDS | WHAT'S NEW | MUST-HAVE BUYS



SPRING PASTELS

This season there's a softer take on colour, with gentle tones of candy pink, mint green, zesty lemon and eggshell blue – perfect for creating a calm and restful mood

COMPILED BY ERICA MILLER

1 ROSE TINTED

Pink desk lamp, £99, Rigby & Mac

2 CANDY CUPPA

Smeg KLFO1 retro-style kettle in mint green, £99.99, Euronics

3 EASTER ADORNMENT

Pussy willow nest, £8, Sainsbury's

4 MOTHER'S DAY BOUQUET

Peony seasonal spring flower arrangement, £39, QVC

5 CASE HISTORY

Pastel retro suitcases, £20 for

a set of three, Barker & Stonehouse

6 SWEET SEAT

Dinton dining chairs in coral, £175 for two, Marks & Spencer

7 GLASS ACT

Maedeli wine glass in blue, £26 for four, Wayfair

8 VELVET TOUCH

Chatsworth two-seater sofa in Chester Hedgerow, £1,800, Laura Ashley

9 FINISHING FLOURISH

Jessica light dusty blue tassel, £9, Bluebellgray



RETRO REVIVAL

With a nostalgic nod, we step back to the 1950s and beyond for the best vintage-inspired designs. When it comes to interiors, the past is most definitely present

1 TAKE A PEW

Tillfälle bench, £100, Ikea

2 LIGHT & SHADE

Mullan Lighting Passion pendant, £341, In-Spaces

3 IN THE GROOVE

Philips OTT2000 original

turntable, with CD and MP3 player, FM radio and bluetooth streaming, £120, Amazon

4 ART OF GLASS

Jack mirror, £550, Jonathan Adler

5 SOFT TO THE TOUCH

Klippan Flower Power cotton

baby blanket, £42, Andshine

6 CITRUS AROMA

Orla Kiely orange rind scent diffuser, £32, John Lewis

7 TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

Beech design cushion, £25, Dickins & Jones collection

at House of Fraser

8 TIME CHECK

Bullitt alarm clock, £37.50, Newgate Clocks

9 MID-CENTURY MARVEL

Whitworth leather chair, £1,000, Laura Ashley

Sale



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Q&A

Our resident interiors expert Rachel Leedham is on hand to answer all your decorating queries

MUSTARD VELVET CUSHIONS

Please could you tell me where I can find velvet cushions in the same yellow colour as the ones in Stephen Ireton and Dan Moore's sitting room (p43, November 2015)? I think they will look great on my new charcoal grey sofa.

JESS BRADLEY, BY EMAIL

You are right – mustard yellow and charcoal are a strong colour combination. I have sourced a few sizes, the largest being Habitat's (0344 499 4686, habitat.co.uk) Regency cushion in Sahara Yellow velvet with a linen back, 60sq cm, £40. Graham and Green (020 8987 3700, grahamandgreen.co.uk) sells its Mustard Yellow velvet cushion (shown right) as a square, 45cmsq, £35; a rectangle, 35 x 50cm, £30; and as a floor cushion, 60sq cm, £60.



CONTEMPORARY FIREPLACE

I love Hannah Jefferson's and Richard Joseph's contemporary fireplace in their living room (p74, December 2015). How could I achieve this modern look in my own home?

NIKKI COVENTRY, BY EMAIL

A 'hole in the wall' gas fire is the perfect way to create a focal point in a modern home. CVO Fire (01325 301020, cvofire.co.uk) is a good port of call. Have a look at its FR920HE gas fire, which can be installed in any existing chimney or used with an adaptor that converts the fire to a cartridge for use with a flue liner. Without the

flue adapter it measures H50 x W92.5 x D30cm, and prices start at £1,999. If you don't have a chimney, the Milano gas fire (above) is easy to install. It's a freestanding unit that uses a power flue and has small pipes that can be routed in any direction (even under the floor) up to 40m. H82 x W151/205 x D34cm, from £6,336.

FRENCH COUNTRY TABLE

Do you have any idea where Georgina and Mark Znowski found the beautiful pale wood dining table in their kitchen-diner (p49, November 2015)?

NADYA JOHNSON, BRIGHTON

This piece, which the couple bought from antiques shop Maison Artefact (020 7381 2500, maisonartefact.com) has a lovely rustic feel. For a real investment piece, I & JL Brown (020 7736 4141, brownantiques.com) has a number of designs that should fit the bill, all of which are available in bespoke finishes. Have a look at the sturdy Lyon table, which features a scrubbed oak top and an ash base, H77.5 x W213 x D102cm, from £5,595. Alternatively, Sweetpea & Willow (0345 257 2627, sweetpeaandwillow.com) sells a Grand Refectory table (shown below), H79 x W220 x D220cm, £985. And Maisons du Monde's (0808 234 2172, maisonsdumonde.com) substantial Lourmarin table in recycled pine is inspired by a monastery table, H78 x W220 x D100cm, £1,199.



BOTANICAL PRINTS

The botanical pictures in Anna Eickholt's dining room are on my wish list (p22, January 2016).

Where can I find ones like these? IMOGEN WARING, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Anna's botanical drawings, which feature identical frames, are hung in a neat grid to create an arresting feature. King & McGaw (01273 511942, kingandmcgaw.com) sells

a series of botanical plates from the Royal Horticultural Society's extensive archives at its Lindley Library (shown right). The prints can be ordered in a range of sizes – the smallest is H40 x W30cm, and costs £14.95 – and you can opt to have them framed in a choice of more than 50 different styles, with prices starting at £47.68 (inclusive of the print). An added plus is that buying a print supports the charitable work of the RHS.



RUSH MATTING

The rustic natural rug in Carole and Jim Gannon's drawing room (p127, January 2016) is exactly what I've been on the hunt for to put in my interior. Can you suggest a suitable supplier?

KAREN BISHOP, SOUTH LONDON

This highly textural style of rug is made from rush matting – an environmentally friendly material that smells wonderful. Rush Matters (01234 376419, rushmatters.co.uk) harvests English freshwater bulrush that is plaited by hand and can be supplied as a rug in any size, or

fitted as a carpet. It costs £204sq m, while binding and underlay can also be added. Pentreath & Hall (020 7430 2526, pentreath-hall.com) sells stylish handwoven, heavy-duty seagrass mats in three sizes, from 60 x 120cm at £25.50 (shown above). The company also sells larger self-assembly sets.

MERCURY GLASS LAMP BASE

For a while now, I've been looking for a pair of mercury glass lamp bases to place on a console table in my sitting room – can you help with my search at all?

RACHEL GREENSTEIN, BY EMAIL

Silvered glass is good for bouncing the daylight around, and looks very pretty when the light is turned on. Atkin and Thyme (0844 409 9834, atkinandthyme.co.uk) has a substantial hand-blown design that measures H64.5 x Dia23cm and comes with a shade in cream linen or black cotton, £99 (shown below). Zara Home (0800 026 0091, zarahome.com) sells a Metallic Glass lamp, H65 x Dia35cm, which comes with a white cotton lampshade, £79.99. And The White Company (020 3758 9222, thewhitecompany.com) offers a Mercury Bottle table lamp, H64 x Dia40cm, £180, inclusive of a white linen shade.



GET IN TOUCH

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Deborah

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KITCHEN

'To get exactly what we wanted, we went for bespoke units from a local kitchen company,' says Caroline.

Cabinetry, price on request, Callaghan Interiors, painted in Railings estate eggshell, £55 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Workers' stools, £130 each, Cox & Cox. Nordflux Float pendants, £110 each, Lighting Direct



REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY A five-bedroom 1930s end-of-terrace

LOCATION South-west London

ROOMS Kitchen-diner/living space, sitting room, office, cloakroom, five bedrooms (one en suite), two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2010

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We used to live in a four-bedroom terrace nearby,' says Caroline.

ADDED BENEFITS

Buying a house on a corner plot has enabled Caroline Green to extend in two directions, providing the space she craved

FEATURE STEPHANIE SMITH | **PHOTOGRAPHY** DAVID GILES

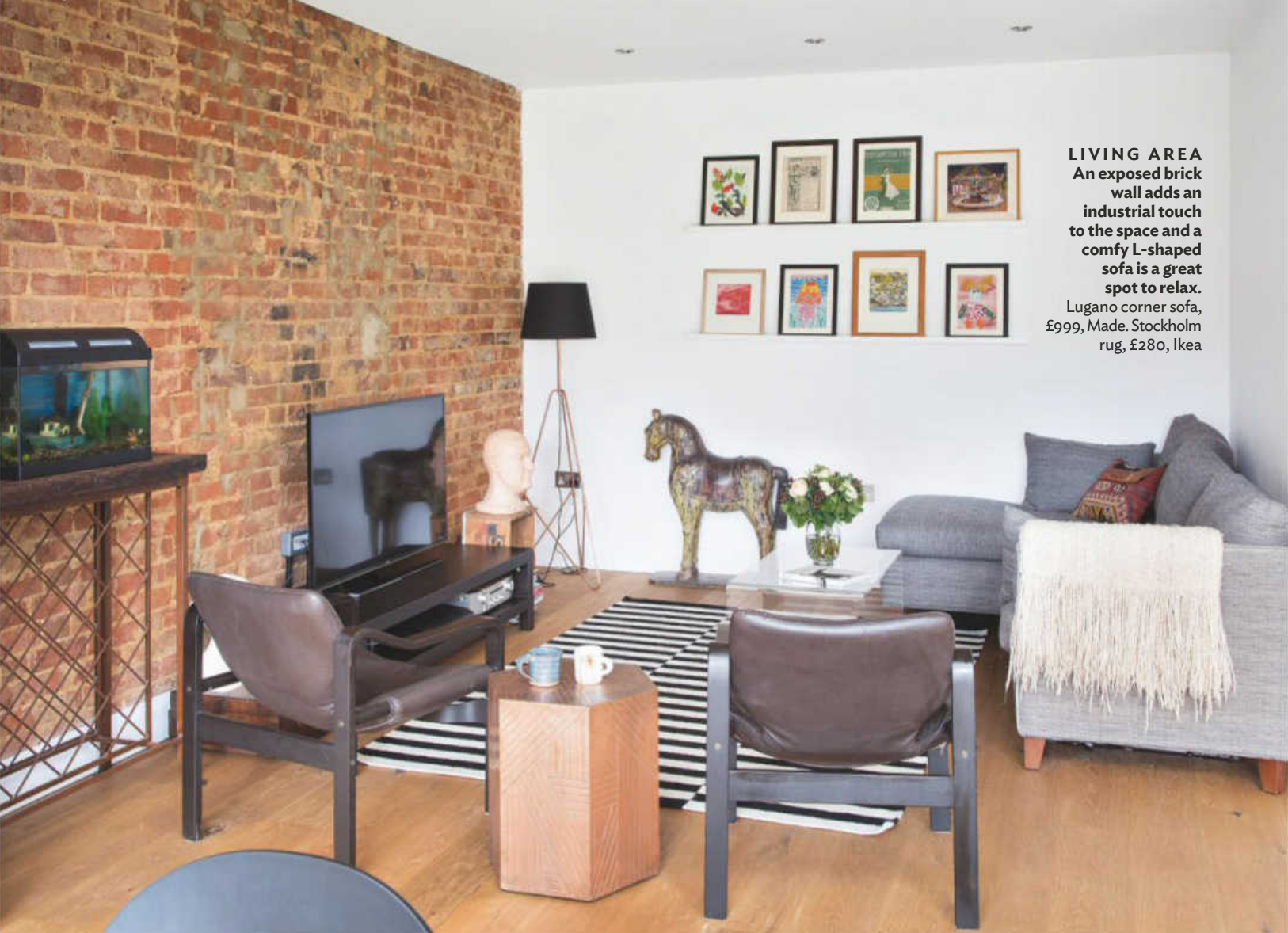


FAVOURITE ROOM

'I love our kitchen-diner/living area. We've tried not to add much furniture and clutter so we keep a sense of space, but it still has warmth and cosiness'

DINING AREA

'We wanted a large table with a vintage feel that could seat a lot of people if necessary, with a view onto the garden, which we can open the doors onto in the summer,' says Caroline
Table, £650, Metro Retro.
Kitsch dining chairs, £59 each, Made



LIVING AREA
An exposed brick wall adds an industrial touch to the space and a comfy L-shaped sofa is a great spot to relax.
Lugano corner sofa, £999, Made. Stockholm rug, £280, Ikea

Coming to live in Twickenham in 2009 after a work move, American Caroline Green and her English husband Peter rented a four-bedroom terraced home in an attractive area that had plenty of green space, restaurants and cafés.

'We really liked living here, and we'd made friends with our neighbours and there was plenty to occupy our children, Maya, now 9, and Oliver, 6, who was then a baby,' says Caroline. 'We decided we'd like to buy and narrowed it down to just a few roads of 1930s houses.' But there was one place in particular that Caroline had always had her eye on.

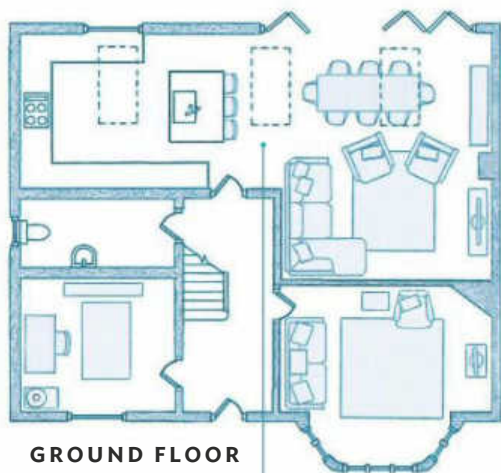
'There was a great property over the road, with a large corner plot and a real chance to extend, both at the side, and the back,' she says. When the house came up for sale in 2010, the couple snapped it up, living in it for a while before making any decisions. 'Instead of rushing into anything, we wanted to think about what would be best for us,' says Caroline. The property was structurally sound but looked dated. And with Arthur, now 3, coming along, readying the place to accommodate a family of five became more urgent.

Downstairs, the small galley kitchen and separate dining room weren't suited to family life, while on the first floor, there were two decent-sized bedrooms and a box room and bathroom, plus a master bedroom and en suite in the loft.

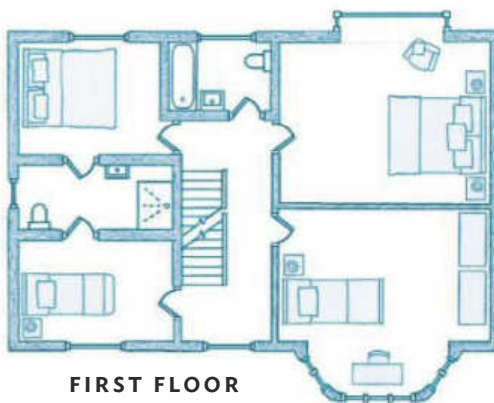
'We consulted an architect, although we had quite strong views ourselves, and he told us what was possible,' says



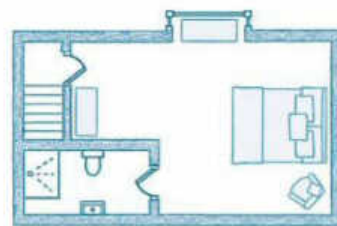
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GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



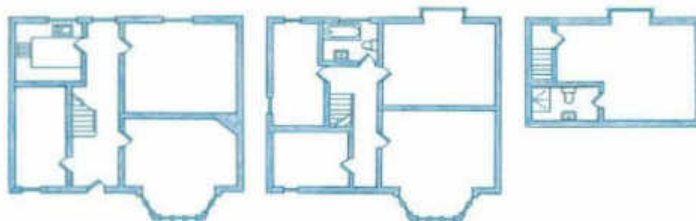
SECOND FLOOR

WIDE-OPEN SPACE

Originally a small galley kitchen and separate dining room, this area didn't match the sociable space the Greens envisioned. 'Opening up the back of the house was important for us to create that open-plan feel,' says Caroline. 'We've also added three Velux windows to bring in more light over the dining area.'



BEFORE



MASTER BEDROOM

'The duvet cover is by John Robshaw - his designs are based on his travels in India and we love the colours and the patterns,' says Caroline.

Margot bed, £825, Loaf. Walls painted in Egyptian Cotton matt, £21.29 per 2.5 litres, Dulux



GUEST BEDROOM

Caroline has made this room as calming and relaxing as possible, by using muted colours and fresh flowers.

Silk grey lampshades, £21.99 each, Taylor'd Lighting. The Gallery Parisian upholstered armchair is comparable, £270, Wayfair

DESIGN TIP *'Before you get started, create a mood board for each room. I found Pinterest great for providing inspiration'*

Caroline. 'I wanted an open-plan space at the back of the house, incorporating the old kitchen and dining room, with bifold doors onto the garden. I can keep an eye on what's going on while I'm cooking, and there's plenty of space for everything from homework to reading.'

The six-month building project began in November 2014, with the family renting in the meantime. 'We've completely renovated everything, putting in a new kitchen, three new bathrooms and painting every wall,' says Caroline. Extending to the side also gave them the chance to add another bedroom and a bathroom. 'We've enlarged the box room and built another bedroom at the back of the house, with a bathroom between the rooms that the boys share, and which can be accessed from both sides.'

Maya's large bedroom is at the front of the house, while Caroline and Peter's quiet master bedroom overlooks the back garden. Upstairs, the loft bedroom and en suite is used when Caroline has visiting guests from America. 'It's nice to offer them a space of their own with a bathroom,' she says.

Something Caroline particularly enjoys is fresh flowers, and she was thrilled to discover roseandmary.co.uk. 'The owner, Leonoor, comes to your house, talks to you, finds out what you like, and then arrives once a week with an amazing box of fresh seasonal flowers. It's so exciting to open the box and see what she's chosen for you. Now the house is finished and cosy, it really adds that extra little touch.' 25

BATHROOM

An original arched window from the side of the house has been kept and is now part of this extension.

Edge pivot door, £345; Edge side panel, £239; Etienne freestanding unit, £385; encaustic patchwork tiles, £89sq m, all Colour 1 Design



BLUE NOTES

Watery shades take their cue from this apartment's riverside location and offer a soothing antidote to Jocelyn Land's busy life

FEATURE RACHEL LEEDHAM
PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH



SITTING AREA

Clean lines and contemporary furnishings create a crisp, modern finish.

Shang extra-fine sisal grasscloth wallpaper, £129 per roll, Thibaut. Brooklyn two-seater sofa, from £2,395 plus fabric; Bolsena Celadon sofa fabric, £40m, both Designers Guild. Satellite wall-mounted unit by Barber Osgerby, from £1,769, Twentytwentyone. Robot Too sideboard in Paper White, £534, &New



INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Top-floor flat in a modern apartment block

LOCATION Southeast London

ROOMS Sitting room/dining area, kitchen, two bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom

PURCHASED 2006

PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'I lived in a one-bedroom flat just around the corner,' says Jocelyn.



DINING AREA

The contemporary artwork inspired Jocelyn's choice of simple, white furniture.

Lundunar Hjola Tre limited edition art, £285 (unframed), Kristjana S Williams. Ottawa table, £1,699, BoConcept. Muuto Visu Colour chair in white, £185, Twentytwentyone. Glass Pumpkin table lamp, £99 (excluding shade), Graham and Green





KITCHEN
A set of wall-hung plates brings humour to this functional space. Fornasetti wall plates, £125 each, Milk Concept Boutique. Bespoke units by K & I Kitchens. Paris Cabaret wall tiles, £8.95 each, Fired Earth



DECORATING TIP
'Use texture to add depth to a scheme without architectural features'



Since moving to southeast London 12 years ago, Jocelyn Land has seen the area go from strength to strength. 'I originally came here because of the river views and great transport links, but now it has lots of wonderful cafés and restaurants,' says Jocelyn, a partner in a law firm. So it was no surprise that she wanted to stay local when she decided to upsize from her one-bedroom flat. 'In fact, I ended up moving just round the corner.'

The appeal of her new two-bedroom apartment, which is situated on the top

floor of a block of flats, was the generous entertaining space and the panoramic view it offers across the River Thames. 'I walked in and saw the huge windows and knew I simply had to buy it,' recalls Jocelyn.

When she moved into the property in 2006, the building was only around 10 years old and the interiors still had the developer's neutral decor. 'It was perfectly fine, and I lived with it for a number of years,' says Jocelyn. 'But I never found the best way to use the main living space.' It was after she made a few tweaks, introducing a dark

stained-oak floor in the sitting room and changing the two bathrooms, that Jocelyn decided to approach interior designer Nicola Pratt to help with the refurbishing. 'Not only was I very busy with work, I also realised that I needed a professional eye to help everything come together,' she says.

First Nicola rejigged the sitting room layout, and had bespoke bookshelves designed to wrap around the seating area, giving it a more intimate feel. The flat has very few architectural details, so Nicola introduced interest with texture instead. She hung



MASTER BEDROOM
A colourful and unique wall hanging catches the eye.

Bogho woven cotton rolls, from £93 each, Kronbali. Boboli glass table lamp, £299, Oka. Three-drawer Cap chests, £455 each, Heal's. Moon ceiling lights, from £74, Holloways of Ludlow



GUEST BEDROOM
Soft blue-green tones are soothing. Wall paint, Brighton absolute matt, £37 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene

DESIGN ADVICE
'Seeing 3D images of schemes gives you the courage to be more daring'



BATHROOM
A bespoke wooden vanity unit and tumble-stone mosaics lend warmth. Duravit Foster washbowl, £212; Hansgrohe Axor Urquiola mixer tap, £678, both CP Hart

a neutral-coloured grasscloth wallpaper throughout the living space, and then streamlined the window treatment to take full advantage of the glorious views. 'Previously there were heavy curtains that had to be tucked behind a bar at the bottom of the sloping windows,' says Jocelyn. 'It's a much brighter space now, with new roller blinds in the same material as the walls discreetly positioned beneath a pelmet.'

Colour plays an important role in creating a sense of unity and connecting the rooms, and Nicola has taken inspiration from

the river and sky with a palette of aqua and turquoise. The two sofas, which help define the seating area of the open-plan space, are upholstered in a watery blue-green fabric, and this colour is carried through to the kitchen where a fish scale-style splashback adds character to the understated white scheme.

More blues appear in the bedrooms, punctuated with touches of gold, orange and brown. 'Nicola cleverly introduced accent colours that tie these spaces in with the bathrooms,' notes Jocelyn. 'What really helped with some of the braver choices, such

as the master bedroom wallpaper, was that I was able to view computer-generated images to see what the finished room would look like.' Nicola adapted some of Jocelyn's existing possessions, including giving each bed a luxurious padded headboard for extra comfort. She also reworked the interior of the fitted cupboards to maximise storage.

Jocelyn is delighted with her remodelled home. 'The rooms function so much better now, and it's a brilliant flat for entertaining in,' she says. 'And I love the different blues – they help to bring everything together.'

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Trad with a TWIST

*Claire Bending and Paul Whittingham
reworked an Edwardian cottage from scratch,
giving its period interior an offbeat feel*

FEATURE JO LEEVERS | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH



SITTING ROOM/DINING AREA

The chimney breast showcases the couple's new-found building skills and forms the main focal point in this characterful area. David Hunt Orb pendant, from £450, Ocean Lighting, is similar. Walls painted in Duck Egg emulsion, £32 per 2.5 litres, Susie Watson Designs. Wilderness two-tier antler chandelier, £895, Alexander & Pearl, has this look. Stone fireplace, around £925, Stone Art Fireplaces



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Terraced cottage, built in 1910

LOCATION Wiltshire

ROOMS Sitting room/dining area, kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, two bedrooms, bathroom

PURCHASED 2012

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We rented a flat in southwest London, before buying this place,' says Claire.



SITTING ROOM

'I saw a pair of mirrors hanging over a sofa in a shop and thought it was a great idea,' says Claire. Heligan arched window mirrors, £295 each, Oka. Bouji ottoman in biscuit beige, £169, Made





DINING AREA

'The stripped floorboards were an important element and we used its tones as a starting point,' says Paul. Singer table, from £1,695, Ines Cole. Flynn dining chairs, £149, each, Made. Swivel stool, £79, Cult Furniture



KITCHEN

'When we have friends over, we tend to congregate around this bar for nibbles and drinks before dinner,' says Claire.

Hygena Cavell units, from £2,536, Homebase. Volcanic Kone kettle, £75, Le Creuset. Retro weighting scales, £9.50, Amazon, is identical

To get a foot on the property ladder, Claire Bending and Paul Whittingham discovered that it paid to think outside the box and look beyond their usual postcode. 'When we bought this house, we were living in a rented flat some 70 miles away in southwest London,' explains Claire. 'But we couldn't afford to buy what we wanted there.'

So the couple expanded their search and eventually a cottage in Wiltshire caught their eye. 'We came to look at this place almost on a whim,' says Claire. 'It needed a huge amount of work, but had a lovely feel. We could envisage what could be done with it.' They went for a second viewing the same day and put in an offer, even though they had little knowledge of the area.

'But now that we've got to know the place, we love it.' 'The house hadn't been touched for 30 years, which gave us the opportunity to take it all back to a blank canvas and start afresh,'

traditional lime-based mortar. 'We're really happy with how that turned out, it's a real focal point,' says Paul.

They also had to install central heating and rewire the house, which, in turn, meant replastering every room. It was at that point – when the build was at its messiest and most drastic – that Claire's family visited. 'They were shocked,' recalls Claire. 'My brother walked from room to room in stunned silence, as if he couldn't quite believe what I'd got myself into.'

The couple stayed on site for the entire renovation, which proved difficult at times. 'When the floorboards were all up downstairs, we basically lived in the second bedroom for a while,' says Claire. 'I did get a bit stir crazy at one point.'

With the building work finished, the couple took an eclectic approach to the decorating. 'We set a fairly traditional backdrop of soft, sage green, and I must have gone through about 20 paint samples to find exactly the right shade,' says Claire. 'Then

LESSONS LEARNT *'In hindsight, nearby while the worst and dustiest*

says Claire. This involved stripping off layer upon layer of wallpaper and polystyrene tiles that lined the bathroom – not to mention replacing the pink 1970s suite. They also lifted carpets and sanded and varnished the original floorboards. A wall between the kitchen and dining room was removed to let light in, creating a more open-plan space. And the couple also knocked through the boarded-up fireplaces, rebuilding the brickwork in the dining room themselves by hand, complete with

I drew together elements from different styles that worked for us. Pieces such as the antler chandelier and industrial-style dining table, plus pops of colour, create a more interesting look.'

What with redesigning every room, the couple's first house renovation has certainly been a huge undertaking. 'When we finished, we were so exhausted we said we'd never do it again,' says Claire. 'But now thinking about how much we've learned, we'd both consider another project when the time is right.' 25



MASTER BEDROOM

Faux fur, wool and cotton make good bedfellows.
Jigsaw stripe duvet cover, £110; pillowcase, £22; Croft Collection cable-knit cushion, £35, all John Lewis.
Find a similar faux-fur throw at House of Fraser, £65



MASTER BEDROOM

The original fireplace was uncovered and fitted with a reclaimed surround.
Armoire painted in Cornforth White estate eggshell, £53 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

we should have moved out and rented part of the building work was going on'



BATHROOM

Sand-coloured floor and wall tiles set a mellow tone.
Corinth travertine tiles, £18.94sq m, Mandarin Stone



GUEST BEDROOM

This versatile space is also an office and music room.
Wall paint, James intelligent matt emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene



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Heaven SENT

Ken and Janine Wilson felt blessed
when they were given the keys
to a stunning historic building

FEATURE NICHOLA HUNTER | **PHOTOGRAPHY** DOUGLAS GIBB



DINING AREA

This part of the property pays homage to its original roots.

Antique Church Furnishings sells comparable pews, from £325. For similar upholstery try Gilded Stripe furnishing fabric, £25sq m, John Lewis. Nymö lampshade, £35, Ikea



KITCHEN

The sleek, stainless steel scheme the Wilsons inherited features all the latest mod cons.

Cavendish Equipment specialises in steel kitchens, price on application. The Black Lily swivel bar stool, £40, Fabulous Furniture, is identical. Cushions, £22 each, Cath Kidston



UNIQUE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Converted church

LOCATION Scottish Borders

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, laundry room, cloakroom, five bedrooms (three en suite), two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2014

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a detached house in Essex for 24 years before moving here,' says Janine.

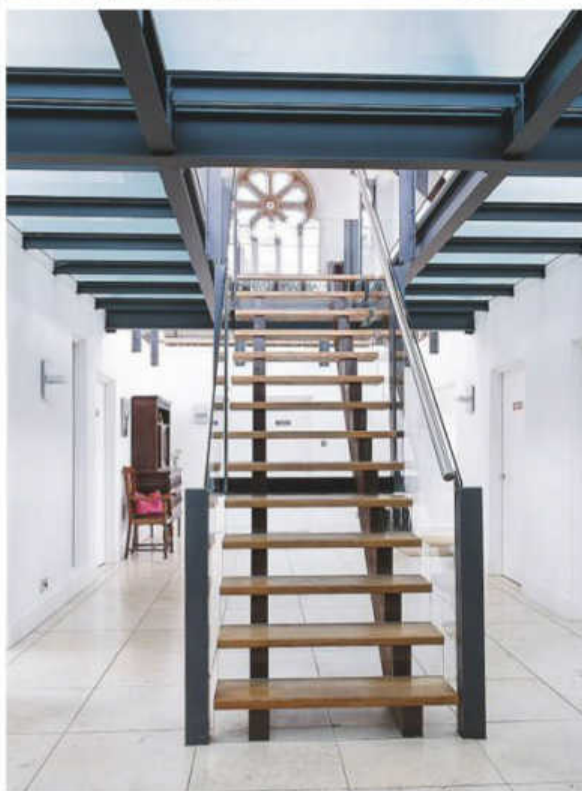


Ken and Janine Wilson were so enthralled by their stay in a converted church in the Scottish

Borders four years ago, that it prompted a major life change.

'We'd always wanted to retire early, and when we saw this property, everything just fell into place,' says Ken. 'Our plan was that we'd relocate here from our home in Essex, and use part of the property as a holiday let.' But first they had to persuade the owner of the unusual house to sell. 'Ken was the driving force behind the negotiations,' says Janine, 'and very soon it was ours.'

The couple set about giving the beautiful former church an ultra-contemporary makeover. Spread over two levels, the ground floor houses bedrooms, bathrooms and a link through to the self-contained vestry, while the first floor features a vast, open-plan kitchen-diner and living space. Centred around a striking staircase, each area works independently as well as creating a cohesive whole. 'This was one of things we really liked about the property,' says Ken. 'I love the atmosphere on the upper level, the huge sense of space and amazing stained-glass windows, but also that each zone



SITTING ROOM

The colours of the stained-glass window have been picked out in this cosy, first-floor area.

Hektor bronze colour floor lamp, £39, Ikea. Khal Mohammadi rug, from £195, John Lewis, is an alternative option. Take a look at Le Corbusier LC4 style black leather recliner/ chaise longue, £169, Milan Direct

HALL

A contemporary staircase with surrounding blue opaque glass panels is the focal point of this bright, minimalist space.

Brussels polished porcelain floor tiles, £30sq m, Topps Tiles, are a match

GUEST BEDROOM

This room has a lovely airiness thanks to the light, neutral decor, with the wallpaper and vibrant rug adding colour and interest.

Newspaper wallpaper, £13.21 per roll, B&Q. Aero Spice rug, £279, Modern Rugs, would work well in this setting. For comparable white table lamps try Lykta, £8.50 each, Ikea





MASTER BEDROOM

A spacious, open-plan layout creates a luxury hotel look in here. Malm high bed frame in oak veneer, £245, Ikea. Broderie Anglaise bedding set, £59, Marks & Spencer. Throw, £70, John Lewis. Phipps Sky rug, from £1,030, Designers Guild, would complement this scheme. Cushion, from £30, Time & Tide

MASTER EN SUITE

The large window ensures this chic white bathroom is drenched in natural light. Due to its high position, no frosted glass or blinds were necessary. Trend freestanding bath, £629; Euro mono WC, £179, both Bathstore. For Turkish Hamam bath towels like these ones try Amazon, £19.99 each

is defined so it works for family living. It doesn't feel vast.

'While we've brought in our own furniture, we've more or less stuck to the existing layout because it works so well. It's a real multipurpose space,' says Ken. 'The way the light filters through the staircase gives the downstairs area real wow factor and a boutique-hotel appeal.'

The all-white interior hasn't been altered much either, but the couple are planning to put more of their personalities into the building. 'I thought about having a different theme for each bedroom, but for now I'm just concentrating on adding colour,' says Janine. 'This has been more difficult than I thought as there's nowhere to hang curtains, which are a big source of colour, so I'm trying out some wallpapers and feature-wall ideas instead.'

'It's been a real learning curve decorating a church, and we'll continue to make gradual changes as we get more of a feel for the property,' adds Janine. 'I've always wanted a huge open-plan home and we're enjoying figuring out the best way to live in it.' 25

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A SHADE CREATIVE

Interior specialist Naomi Jones used her favourite colours to add a vibrant touch to her period home

FEATURE JASMINE ONO
PHOTOGRAPHY BRENT DARBY

DISTINCTIVE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached Victorian house

LOCATION Kent

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, office, two bedrooms, bathroom

PURCHASED 2012

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We moved from a Georgian apartment in southeast London, as we wanted a garden for our little girl to play in,' says Naomi.

SITTING ROOM

Modern and vintage combine in this personality-rich setting.

Grande Dame small sofa, £2,489,

Sofa Workshop. Flynn armchair

in peat herringbone Harris

Tweed, £999, John Lewis. Feature

wall painted in colour-matched

green flat matt emulsion, £22.67

per 2.5 litres, Crown



KITCHEN
This shelf replaced a larder. 'It provides endless styling opportunities for me,' says Naomi. Metal shelving, £39.99, Homebase. Tea sign, £13.99, Shabby Store



The two-bedroom Kent home Naomi Jones shares with her husband Dan Turner and their daughter Lillie-Mae, 4, is clear evidence of her fondness for vibrant shades. A trio of skateboards over the fireplace, graphic artwork in the kitchen and home office, and framed maps in the bedroom all play their part to liven up the walls. 'Being surrounded by colour at home is really important to me,' says Naomi, an interior stylist and writer.

Offering a cohesive backdrop to the couple's varied collections is a combination of off-white walls and various shades of green throughout. 'We wanted to unify all the rooms somehow and colour is an effective way to do that,' says Naomi. The green in Lillie-Mae's room is subtle and

fresh with requisite splashes of pink; the shade for the sitting room is vibrant, and the moody tone in the master bedroom is the perfect backdrop for the vintage music sheets covering one wall. In the functional areas, an olive green has been chosen as the dominant colour. Its rich warmth along with traditional furnishings helps fuse these rooms together.

However, it's the characterful bathroom, where bolder tones appear, that Naomi is most proud of. 'I don't like walking into a stark white space,' she says. 'I wanted our bathroom to feel more like a dressing room. I've always dreamt of painted panelling, a large walk-in shower and a roll-top bath, and we loved the idea of fitting the basin and tap into a piece of furniture.' With a dresser that had



OFFICE
The old dining area has been turned into a chic work space. Fisherman's pendant, £109, Fields of Blue. Tickets Please cushion, £35, Mini Moderns



HALL
Naomi enjoys creating displays. Walls painted in Flake White matt emulsion, £35.50 per 2.5 litres, Fired Earth



DESIGN TIP 'Create a Pinterest mood board quickly and instinctively, and it will focus you on what you really want'

MASTER BEDROOM

Thick carpet adds a warm, cosy finish.

Chimney breast painted in Tundra matt emulsion, £35.50 per 2.5 litres, Fired Earth. Maria Steampunk brass pendant, £307, Urban Cottage Industries. Burnt Gold mohair throw, £89.95, Bronte by Moon. Lenda tie-back curtains, £20 per pair, Ikea



BATHROOM
This has a fresh, natural feel. Panel paint, Olive estate eggshell, £55 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Mountain Ash riven slate, £47sq m, Artisans of Devizes



been transformed by local upcycler Julie Gaskell, and builder Rob, of Robert Joseph Developments, finessing and implementing Naomi's designs and bespoke components she had tracked down, the family now have a beautiful bathroom they all love to use.

Rob also oversaw the building of a side-return extension to square off the house downstairs and open up the sitting room to the kitchen and garden beyond. And Naomi and Dan spent many late nights working out how to configure the new kitchen-diner so that it would be stylish as well as functional. Although they needed some fitted units for practical reasons, they wanted the room to feel as relaxed and freestanding as possible. So they commissioned another dresser

from Julie – who also painted the existing units to match – and bought inexpensive industrial-style metal shelves.

'We've tied it all together using colour again, this time the same gorgeous black shade that Julie had used on the bathroom dresser,' explains Naomi. 'It gives an artisanal feel to everyday items and makes the oak worktops really shine.

'Dan has done the lion's share of the painting, though,' continues Naomi, who is much happier ripping up carpets and peeling off wallpaper when she's not busy styling and designing. 'The transformation has definitely been a team effort and all our careful planning has really paid off,' she adds. 'Everyone involved worked so hard to create the vision I had for our colourful home.'



BATHROOM
An old piece of furniture has been beautifully re-utilised.

Upcycled dresser, £300, Julie Gaskell; painted in Off-Black estate eggshell, £55 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Milk jug, £21, Jane Sarre Ceramics



LILLIE-MAE'S BEDROOM
This sweet scheme inspires creativity. The East Coast Alaska sleigh cotbed, £250, Winstanleys Pramworld, will work



COLOUR HAPPY

Laetitia Nallet has spread a little joy around her Parisian home using a bold palette and plenty of imagination

FEATURE KAREN JENSEN-JONES | PHOTOGRAPHY MARTIN DESJARDINS/CAMERA PRESS



DINING AREA

Painting the original wall panels in colourful tones has given them a modern feel.

To recreate this look try First Blush, Wild Violet, Vreeland Pink and Dianthus Pink matt emulsion, £39 per 2.5 litres, all Designers Guild. Asper dining table, £350, Habitat. Preben dining chairs, £80 each, Ikea



DISTINCTIVE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Three-storey townhouse,
built around 1900

LOCATION Paris, France

ROOMS Hall, sitting room,
kitchen-diner, three bedrooms,
two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2012

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived in
an old house with a modern glass-
cube extension,' says Laetitia.

FAVOURITE ROOM 'I love the lounge area, as it's where we naturally come together as a family. It's very laid-back and I enjoy the interaction we have in there'

SITTING ROOM

'When I found this pendant lamp, I just had to have it because the shape is so interesting,' says Laetitia.

Giboulee hanging lamp, around £300, Céline Wright.

Strappy absolute matt emulsion, £37 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene, is a comparable wall shade. Pappelina Vera and Vivi cushions, £27 each, Bruno+Bean



Laetitia Nallet found her three-bedroom home in the Paris suburb of Colombes in the least-expected way – through a classified ads website. 'I was casually browsing the web one day when I saw this house for sale,' says Laetitia, mother to Elliot, 23, Justine, 18, and Milo, 13. 'I couldn't quite believe my luck as it was just what I was looking for after my divorce. However, when I went to view the property, I could see that it needed a lot of work as it seemed

frozen in time. The rooms were very small and featured thick old carpet and dated wallpaper. When it was built there was no garden, and in the 1970s the owners bought a piece of land behind the house but the only access was through the garage. So with all of the windows looking out onto the street, it felt dark and gloomy.'

Despite the uninspiring outlook, Laetitia bought the property as she could see it had great potential. 'I knew that letting light into the house would make a big difference so I added two wide glass doors



HALL

The entrance is bursting with colour and pattern.
Babouche estate eggshell, £55 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball, is a matching yellow. Starburst mirror, £40, Argos, has this look

KITCHEN

Gold accents help lift this dark, daring scheme.
Golden Midas mosaics, £59.25 per sheet, Walls and Floors. Try the Searchlight dome ceiling pendant, £72, Ocean Lighting



at the back, which open out onto the garden, French windows in the hall and a large window above the kitchen sink,' she explains. 'To allow light to permeate and create a large open space, I also removed the dividing walls on the ground floor. I retained the separate entrance area, though, as it's useful for storing coats and shoes.' The original floorboards and wooden staircase needed plenty of attention, too. 'Once I removed the carpets and sanded the floor and staircase, I used a tinted grey oil on the boards, which has given



MILO'S ROOM

Laetitia's signature panels create a striking backdrop. Cornish Ware, Bayswater Blue, Jodhpur Palace and Clear Sky matt emulsion, £39 per 2.5 litres, Designers Guild, are similar hues

BATHROOM

'Using colour in a small room can take the focus away from its size,' says Laetitia.

The Varpan Fun 1DM ceiling pendant, £616, Design 55, is an equally glamorous light fitting



JUSTINE'S BEDROOM

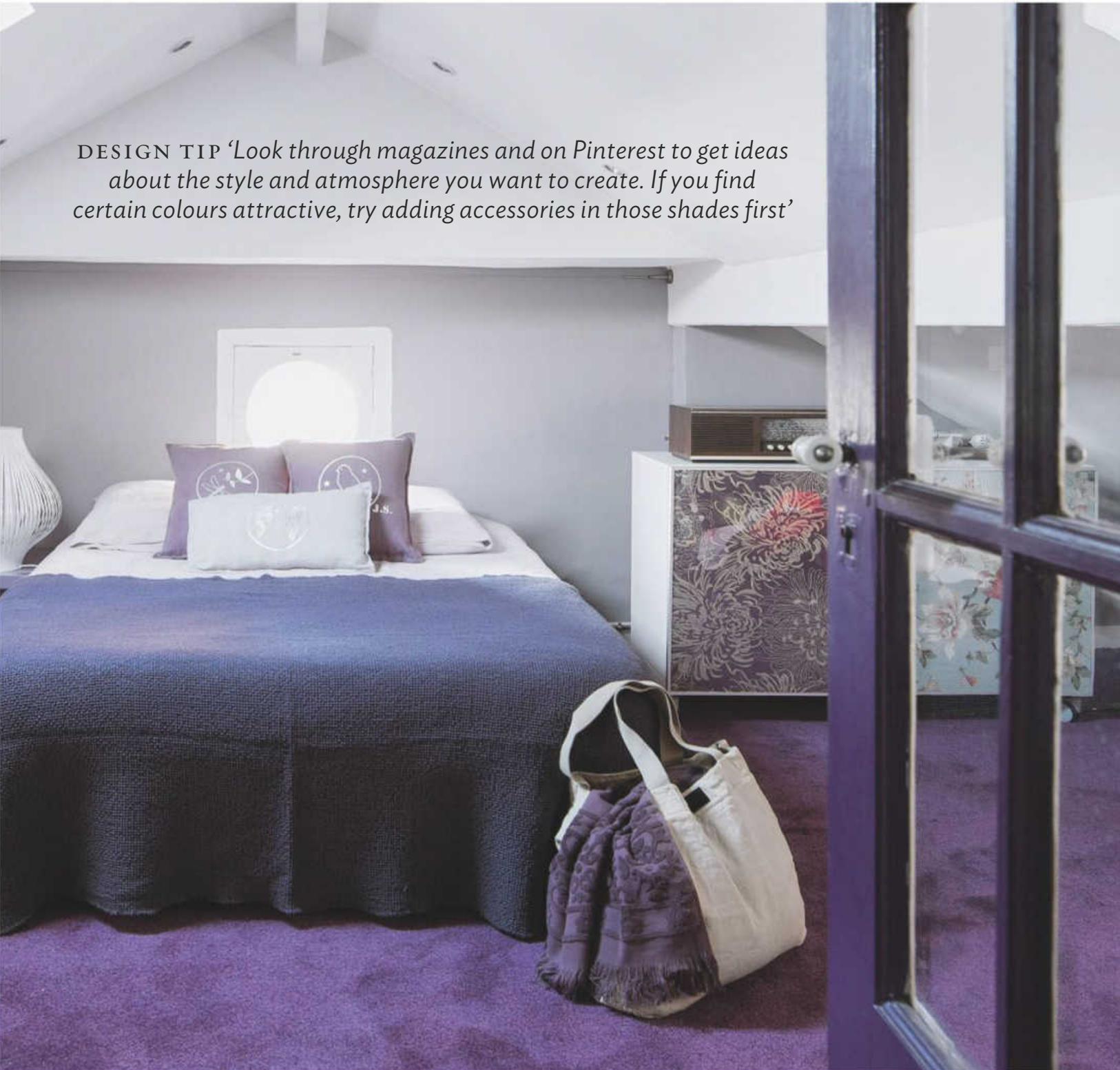
Attic rooms are perfect for teenagers, offering a private retreat. 'I chose plush carpet as my daughter loves lounging on the floor,' adds Laetitia.

Bowlloom's Monte Carlo velvet twist carpet in Parma, from £40sq m, is similar. The Harmony ribboned table lamp, £45, John Lewis, is comparable

them a more contemporary look, and a contrasting dark colour on the rest of the woodwork has brought the look to life.'

Despite her love of period features, Laetitia wanted to add her own modern signature style to the interior. 'I love using colour, but one has to be very careful not to overdo it,' she says. 'It makes me smile and it's certainly a talking point when people visit my home. I'm particularly drawn to purple and pink because they're cheerful, and I also like greens and khaki for their depth. However, I would

DESIGN TIP 'Look through magazines and on Pinterest to get ideas about the style and atmosphere you want to create. If you find certain colours attractive, try adding accessories in those shades first'



always recommend using sample pots and checking your chosen colour combinations in different types of light first,' she adds.

Laetitia has used colour in fun and exiting ways, including painting a series of wall panels in the style of a Pantone colour chart. 'I decided to highlight the original mouldings in the dining area using various shades of pink,' she explains. 'It was an experiment at first, but it turned out so well that I used the same effect in Milo's bedroom, this time using different types of blue. And to add a welcoming

touch to the hall, I drew a huge yellow circle on the wall to frame a mirror and painted the ceiling yellow, too. This is a simple and unique way to liven up the atmosphere.'

Other splashes of colour, including gold mosaic tiles in the kitchen and purple walls in the sitting room, are used playfully throughout, showing off Laetitia's confidence with colour. 'Used creatively and sparingly it can be very striking,' she says. 'It has certainly added life and soul to our new home.' 25

Insight

USING COLOUR IN YOUR INTERIORS

Inspired by Laetitia Nallet's colourful home? There are plenty of ways to achieve a similar scheme

Bold colours and creative paint techniques work wonderfully in Laetitia's home. But putting colour schemes together can be tricky. Start with a complementary palette of trending tones and classic shades, and add accent hues. Consulting basic colour theory will ensure your scheme flows.

Be brave

If you are taken by a certain shade, paint both your walls and ceiling to create the illusion of space. A bold hue can transform the mundane into something exciting – think about radiators, shelves, doors and windows. Back-painted glass in bathrooms and splashbacks in kitchens can also bring pops of colour to domestic spaces.

Create an exciting look with unusual combinations, such as two contrasting colours. Split contrast schemes mix two closely related and one unrelated colour, and for impact use the brightest tone as an accent. A monochromatic palette using different shades of the same colour is also effective. Try transferring these hues to

door and wall panels, and cornicing and dado rails. Play with pattern, too. Stripes, squares and spots are all eye-catching, while wallpapers introduce texture.

Tricks of the trade

Consult a colour wheel to find daring hues that work together. Colour changes with its surroundings. The tone is never quite the same depending on the surface, and the finish will also transform the overall look. Matt and eggshell provide a soft sheen, whereas gloss and oil have shiny finishes.

Inspiration can be found in the latest trends. Rich metallics are popular in 2016. Dulux's colour of the year is Cherished Gold and Pantone's top shades are Serenity and Rose Quartz. These blue and pink pastels evoke a sense of mindfulness and wellbeing for rejuvenating interiors.

Remember, a striking scheme does not need to be bright. Abigail Ahern is known for using dark tones – think intense indigos and charcoals, which create a snug and cosy scheme, where pops of colour can be added with accessories.



PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'Colour is powerful. It can both uplift and relax us, but it can also make us quite uncomfortable, so often there is trepidation when it comes to experimenting with new hues.'

To gain confidence in choosing unusual shades and to express your personality, begin by making a sample board. Think of it like cooking, with colours representing ingredients and flavours. Collate images, swatches, fabrics and photographs to paint a picture of your desired scheme. This allows you to marry finishes together to ensure they work as one.

We like to use a 'suit jacket' effect on kitchen joinery by making the outside a more muted colour and the insides pop with a strong hue when the doors are open. Using coloured grout with plain white metro tiles is another fun effect, and painting the insides of door panels with bright shades also makes a striking finish.

For more inspiration and ideas, look to the world of fashion – the catwalk is a marvellous place to see daring combinations. Natural landscapes can also stimulate your colour sense. We use natural pigment paint in homes, which is solvent free. It is better for the environment and mirrors the true tones of nature.'

RORY MACPHERSON, PLAY ASSOCIATES

ADDRESS BOOK

Rory Macpherson 020 7637 8697, play-associates.com

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Farrow & Ball: Decorating with Colour – Interiors from an iconic heritage brand by Ros Byam Shaw, £35

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Pantone Colours 01233 225 450, pantone-colours.com

Inspiration from the Pantone colour guides



Orange and light grey hues lend a contemporary touch



Monochromatic schemes are more simple to design



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PRETTY PERFECT

Pink is the order of the day in Marieke van Mameren's happy home

FEATURE ALIX O'NEILL | PHOTOGRAPHY SIMONE VAN REES/COCO FEATURES



SITTING ROOM

Marieke's favourite scheme is a celebration of colour and pattern.

The Garston love seat in deep pink, £499, Made, is similar. Dayroom Yellow estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball, is a matching wall colour.

Take a look at the Jonesy sofa in Dusk vintage linen, £1,095, Loaf

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Early 20th-century townhouse

LOCATION

Oisterwijk, Netherlands

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, office, sunroom, five bedrooms, two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2007

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived in a semi-detached house in The Hague,' says Marieke.



DINING ROOM

This uplifting design has a fun, flamboyant and family-friendly feel.

Rosa Alba wallpaper, £67 per roll, Nina Campbell. The Studio #38 dresser, £2,195, The Kitchen Dresser Company, has this look

KITCHEN

The antique chairs and statement chandelier enliven the minimalist all-white scheme.

Try Magnet's Era kitchen, from £5,673. Bianco Carrara polished marble tiles, from £44.28sq m, Stone Tile Market, is comparable



Finding and creating the perfect family home took some time for Marieke van Mameren and husband Ralph, who spent more than a year scouring the Noord-Brabant region of the Netherlands. 'When we first saw this place online, I was sceptical as there's a railway line nearby,' recalls Marieke. 'But we viewed the property anyway and loved it from the moment we stepped inside. We needn't have worried about the trains, either, as you can't hear anything.'

The couple moved here nine years ago, but Ralph sadly passed away in 2014. Marieke remained in the house, built in 1917, with their daughters, Brit, now 10, and Puck, 7, and Ralph's teenage children, Max and Kiki, from a previous marriage. The property required some decorative attention, but no structural changes were needed. 'I wanted an *Alice in Wonderland* look to create a family home that



BRIT'S BEDROOM

This design showcases Marieke's love of pattern. Antique Rose Bouquet wallpaper, £25 per roll, Cath Kidston, Elgin Flower Kids rug, £195, Designers Guild

would feel happy,' says Marieke, an interior stylist. 'In this house, we needed fresh colours to lighten up some of the rooms so we used warm yellow, several shades of grey and plenty of pink.'

From a super-comfy fuchsia love seat in the sitting room to the muted rose tones in the girls' bedrooms, pink reigns supreme in the van Mameren household. Its most daring application is in the dining room, where pastel pink walls meet a striking floral wallpaper by Nina Campbell. A chandelier picked up on holiday in Saint Tropez and a set of vintage chairs help temper the look. There's a smaller but similar set up in the kitchen, reserved for breakfasts and coffee breaks.

Although less pink appears in the sitting room, it's far from sedate. Yellow walls, a large blue sofa, lilac lampshades, floral prints and stripes, not forgetting the eye-catching love seat, make an uplifting combination. 'It's so cosy in there with its bright colour, comfy seating and fireplace,' explains Marieke. 'This space makes me feel safe, and is where the children and I spend most of our time hanging out together.'

Upstairs, a more whimsical approach has been taken. Delicate canopies are suspended

over the younger siblings' beds, while charming handmade pieces by Marieke's father, such as the vintage-style dresser painted in soft green in her daughter Brit's room, are a unique addition. Decorated in a palette of soft white and grey, with subtle floral motifs and elegant French-style furniture, Marieke's own bedroom is surprisingly understated. But the overall effect is calming, and a welcome respite from the riot of colour and pattern elsewhere.

There's a distinct warmth and playfulness and about this house now – it has a fun, almost fairy tale-like feel. And as Marieke intended, it's a very happy and colourful home, which is as much down to the positive outlook of its owner, as the vibrant decor. 'I love living in this beautiful house,' she enthuses. 'It inspires me.' 25



MASTER BEDROOM

Marieke swapped vibrant colour and pattern for a softer, more romantic look.

Try Adeline bedlinen, from £20 for a pillowcase, The White Company

BATHROOM

Glass mosaics on the floor, bath and wall create an arresting effect.

Mosaictileshop.co.uk sells a wide choice of tile designs



FAVOURITE ITEM *'There's a green cabinet in my daughter's bedroom with handpainted wild roses, which my father made for me – it's very special'*

TAKE A LOOK AT THE REST OF MARIEKE'S HOME



BEDROOM
This has a chic, feminine feel. For a tailor's dummy try Vintage Style Mannequins, from £210



SUNROOM
The children play and watch TV in here. Nina Campbell Perroquet wallpaper, £67 per roll, Designer Wallpapers



LANDING
An antique chair adds elegance. For similar upholstery try Mulberry Ancient Tartan, £95m, Jane Clayton





DINING AREA
Simple, clean lines
are the order of
the day here
For a similar table try
the Bramante, from
£599, Made.com.
Eames, DSW chairs,
£333 each, The
Conran Shop



INSPIRING

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Wooden house, built in the 1970s

LOCATION Denmark

ROOMS Open-plan sitting
room, kitchen-diner, study, four
bedrooms, two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2007

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here we lived
in a one-bedroom apartment in
Copenhagen,' says Nicklas.

WIDE OPEN SPACES

*Nicklas and Cæcilie Bødtker-Hansen
left the bright lights of Copenhagen
for a new life in the country*

FEATURE PENNY BOTTING | **PHOTOGRAPHY** IBEN AND NIELS AHLBERG/NEW STYLE INTERIOR



SITTING ROOM
 'The large windows that look onto the garden make us almost feel like we're outside,' says Nicklas.
 Karlstad sofa, £279, Ikea. Habitat's Pip wooden table lamp, £25, has the look of this one. For a similar coffee table try the Swan, £179, Vita Interiors



KITCHEN

'This is our favourite space,' says Nicklas. 'We love how it connects with the living area.'

Kitchen units, price on application, HTH.

The Banshee Black three-door glass sideboard, £895, Habitat, would suit this space

DESIGN TIP
'For a clean look that will stand the test of time, go for classic colours, and avoid the temptation to add too much furniture'

Lovely though it was, Nicklas and Cæcilie Bødtker-Hansen's city apartment in Copenhagen proved too small when their daughter, now 8, was born. 'We also wanted to add to our family, so we presumed that before long, we'd be needing even more space,' says Nicklas.

So, the house search began, and at the top of their wish list was a property with a garden, lots of outdoor green spaces nearby, close to local schools, yet still near enough to the capital for work, to visit friends and also to get the occasional cultural fix.

'When we saw this house, the spirit and warmth of the place really appealed to us,' says Nicklas. 'The previous owners were a

sweet family who had lived there their whole lives. It was this feeling, plus the fact that it ticked all the boxes on our wish list, that made us buy it almost immediately.'

The perfect layout

One of the other features they admired about the property was the fact that there was no space wasted in its configuration. 'There was very little to do to the house, other than paint the walls and move in,' says Nicklas.

Following a swift purchase and a few cosmetic changes, the family lived happily for a few years until they knew exactly what they wanted to do, and how to adapt the property to suit their needs. 'The main changes we

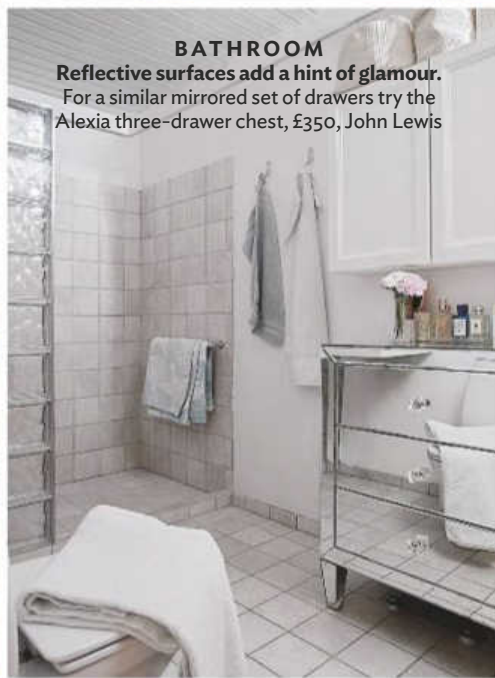
made were to the kitchen,' says Nicklas. 'This was originally closed in, so we pulled down an interconnecting wall to create an open living and dining area.' As well as updating the windows they installed a fireplace. 'This was essential, to help beat out the cold Danish winters,' says Nicklas.

Many of their decorating ideas came from magazines, books and TV programmes but Cæcilie makes most of the design decisions. 'She's usually in charge and has the final say,' says Nicklas. 'But we agreed on the overall scheme, opting for Nordic colours, with light walls and wooden flooring. We also wanted calm tones to create a relaxed atmosphere and to blend in with the surrounding



STUDY

Double doors out to the garden make this an inviting guest room for stayovers.
Floor lamp 321, £500, Le Klint. Eames RAR chair, £442, The Conran Shop



BATHROOM

Reflective surfaces add a hint of glamour.
For a similar mirrored set of drawers try the Alexia three-drawer chest, £350, John Lewis



CHILDREN'S BEDROOM

Bunk beds are the ideal way to maximise this compact space.
Corona bunk bed, £380, Bedroom World

landscape, so we avoided any schemes or paint shades that were too bright.'

To give the whole space a unique feel, they trawled antiques shops for lucky finds, and added personal touches such as family photographs. 'We now have a son as well as a daughter, and obviously have lots of pictures of them on display,' says Nicklas.

So, was the move from the city worth it? 'The cultural and dining scene in the countryside is very different from the city, but we now have a lovely garden and a forest right next door,' says Nicklas. 'The location and the sense of privacy are perfect. We love the property, for its location and its interior – it's not just a house, it's our home.'



MASTER BEDROOM

The couple have cleverly combined old and new with vintage fabrics and modern floor lamps.
Bedding was bought in San Francisco, for similar fabric try the Amborella Silk, £68.95 m, Harlequin

SITTING ROOM

'We wanted to create a white, open space with statement pieces and lots of good storage,' says Alice.

Karlstad sofa with chaise longue in Isunda grey, £755; Karlstad armchair, £255, both Ikea. White Messina coffee table, £140, and side table, £80, both Debenhams, would also work well in here



INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Victorian end-of-terrace

LOCATION

Southwest London

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner, home office, cloakroom, three bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom

PURCHASED 2012

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we had a maisonette nearby,' says Alice.

BRIGHT FANTASTIC

Alice Smallman-Walsh and husband Matt created a light-filled family home with long-lasting appeal

FEATURE KATIE GIBBS | PHOTOGRAPHY TOM MEADOWS



Alice Smallman-Walsh and husband Matt were happily settled in southwest London when Alice became pregnant with daughter Tillie, now 4. They knew their one-bedroom flat wouldn't be big enough when the baby came, so they began planning a move to a larger home in the same area. 'Unlike many other London suburbs, it has resisted over-development and retains a historic, semi-rural feel,' says Alice.

As Matt works in the construction business, the couple weren't at all daunted

by the idea of a big renovation project and saw it as a great way to get more for their money. Eventually, the right property came onto the market – a rundown cottage close to the River Thames. 'It was uninhabitable and crying out to be returned to the family home it used to be,' recalls Alice. Another major plus point, the couple noted, was that the building clearly had the potential to be extended both at the side and back, as it was an end-of-terrace.

Buying the house turned out to be more complicated than they expected, as it was

being sold through probate. The couple also needed to get planning permission for the structural changes and extensions they had in mind, and were keen to secure this before they moved in. 'It was a long, drawn-out and stressful period during which we didn't know if we would ever actually own it,' says Alice. It ended up taking a year to get everything sorted out before the pair finally received the keys to their new home in March 2012.

By then, their daughter was nine months old, but the house was a long way from being ready to move into. It was in a poor state



KITCHEN-DINER

Alice found clever ways to add warmth and detail to this bright, all-white design.

Limed elm dining table, £850, Peppermill Antiques. Eames-style DAR chair, £34.99, Vertigo Interiors. Try Imperial Lighting's tapered drum ceiling shade in taupe, £58

LESSON LEARNT *'We were a little apprehensive of colour and used white throughout,*

of repair, with ceilings falling in, rotten floorboards, unsafe joists and damp walls everywhere. The layout of rooms didn't suit the pair, either: the separate living and dining spaces were small and dark; the galley kitchen was tacked onto the back of the house with the bathroom beyond, and upstairs there were only two bedrooms and no bathroom.

The family decamped to Alice's mum's house nearby during the building works. Matt started by gutting the place, removing

all the exterior walls and propping up the roof structure and the first floor with temporary steel supports. 'It sounds drastic,' says Alice, 'but that's what we had to do as we wanted to have an open-plan ground floor, and were enlarging to the side and back.' What strikes you when you walk into the house is that you can see all the way through from the front door to the garden.

The couple, who now have another daughter, Hattie, now 2, also wanted a space

that was child friendly. 'We planned it so we can see the whole of the ground floor from nearly any angle, so I can keep an eye on what the children are up to,' explains Alice. To enable this, the doorway connecting the kitchen-diner to the sitting room was enlarged and a sliding door fitted to close off one room from the other when needed.

Concealing clutter was another important consideration. 'I like a clean, tidy environment,' says Alice, 'which is nigh-on



BEDROOM

'I wasn't exactly sure about the look I wanted in here,' says Alice. 'I just knew it had to have a warm feel.'

Louie sleigh bed, £349, Time 4 Sleep; painted in Pure and Paris Grey chalk paint, each £18.95 per litre, Annie Sloan. Samantha lamps, £32 each, B&Q



TILLIE'S BEDROOM

A crown canopy is a great idea to give a little girl's room a fairytale feel.

Canopy, £16, Mosquito Nets Online UK. Try Kidkraft sleigh toddler bed, £128, Amazon



BATHROOM

These textural wall tiles look striking.

Ledgestone splitfaced tiles, £6.25 per sheet, The Mosaic Tile Shop. See Ramia vanity unit, £249, Bathandshower.com



which turned out to be a good idea as it's so easy to touch up when you have children around'

impossible with children, so we included plenty of cupboard space in every room.'

In the sitting room, Matt's company built a slimline, wall-hung run of drawers either side of the chimney breast. 'We wanted them off the floor to create the illusion of more space,' adds Alice. The under-stairs area was also used, with built-in cupboards forming a compact home office. In the kitchen, an entire wall is given over to floor-to-ceiling cupboards, which conceal a mini laundry,

complete with washing machine and dryer, a utility area, shelving and a cloakroom.

Alice and Matt had plenty of time to come up with decorating ideas during the lengthy buying and renovating process. 'I'd put together a mood board of images from magazines along with photos of objects I'd taken while out and about,' says Alice. 'And we got most of the work done before moving into the house in October 2013. We still had skirting boards to put on and worktops

to fit, but the most important thing was the house was habitable and safe for Tillie. Two years on, we're still letting it evolve and building on the strength of each room.

'I'm so grateful Matt's company did the building work, as it meant that we avoided those nightmare stories you often hear about – which was just as well considering the stressful time we'd had buying the place,' says Alice. 'It's also satisfying to know that we created our beautiful home ourselves.'

What caught your eye first, the kitchen or the price?



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KITCHENS

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Moving to the countryside was always part of the plan for Felicia and Roland Hulme-Beaman, but not until they found the perfect property

FEATURE PENNY CRAWFORD-COLLINS | PHOTOGRAPHY PHILIP LAUTERBACH



DISTINCTIVE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Restored farmhouse and outbuildings

LOCATION Kilkenny, Ireland

ROOMS Hall, drawing room, kitchen-diner/sitting room, study, utility room, gallery, studio, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, plus a three-bedroom annex

PURCHASED 2006

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a Victorian red-brick house in Dublin,' says Felicia.

SITTING AREA

Due to the vast amount of space available, the couple created numerous seating areas throughout.

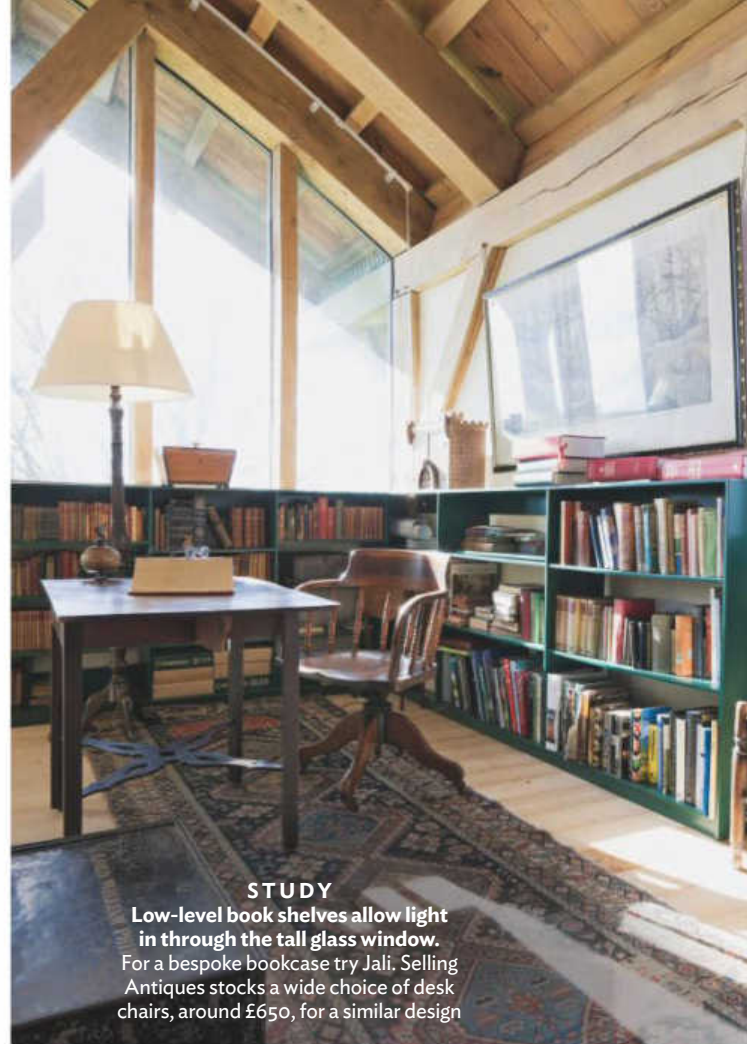
Oak frame built by Carpenter Oak, price on application.

Karlstad two-seater sofa, £279, Ikea, is a good alternative. Black aluminium baroque side/occasional table, £90, Amazon, would work well here



GALLERY AREA

Here Felicia and Roland can relax between floors and enjoy the views from a higher perspective. Ultra Blue absolute matt emulsion, £49 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene, is a matching wall paint. Kattrup flat-woven rug, £270, Ikea, has this look



STUDY

Low-level book shelves allow light in through the tall glass window. For a bespoke bookcase try Jali. Selling Antiques stocks a wide choice of desk chairs, around £650, for a similar design

A desire to swap the anonymity and pace of city living for a country retreat is what led Felicia and Roland Hulme-Beaman to move from a Victorian red-brick house in Dublin to a stunning contemporary farmhouse in County Kilkenny. 'We both wanted a break from the city and were longing for a rural existence,' explains Felicia. 'Roland had been brought up on a farm in Gloucestershire and had happy memories of life there, so we decided that once the children had finished their education, we'd make the move.'

After a lengthy search between 2001 and 2006, the couple came across this unique and beautifully restored farmhouse. 'We were at once smitten by the space, the light and the fabulous views,' recalls Felicia. The old, derelict stone buildings dated back to the 1600s and were previously owned by a couple of musicians, who embarked on an elaborate restoration, incorporating a striking oak frame and plenty of glass throughout for a contemporary edge.

When Felicia and Roland bought the property it was completely open plan, with a 'performance area' on the second floor. 'We were initially seduced by its proportions and layout, and very hesitant to make any alterations. But as we lived in it we realised it was totally impractical for a family, as there was no privacy and very little storage space,' says Felicia. So they decided to section off the performance area and divide it up to make it more suitable for day-to-day living. Now there are two double bedrooms, a large wet room,



KITCHEN

Modern white units and stainless steel worktops are practical and low-maintenance solutions.

Veddinge door panel, from £12, Ikea, is comparable. For bespoke stainless steel worktops try MPM Engineering Services



MASTER BEDROOM

Combining dark and light wood furniture provides depth of colour and contrast.

Willis & Gambier Keep bedstead, £750, John Lewis, is comparable. Walls painted in Green Ground estate emulsion, £39.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



BATHROOM

Splashes of colour add interest and fun to this clean and simple scheme.

Jessi designer radiator (unpainted), £175, Lime Kitchen & Bathroom, is identical. Wildenfairs.com sells milking stools, £70



GUEST BEDROOM

A floral theme creates a calm atmosphere.

Sanderson Voyage of Discovery Clementine wallpaper in Delft Blue is a pretty option, £48.90 per roll, Fashion Interiors

a spacious drawing room with study and a gallery area, which all boast spectacular views of the beautiful Kilkenny countryside. Downstairs, the house consists of an open-plan kitchen with dining area and a living space with a series of seating areas, plus another two bedrooms.

During the conversion, the couple were keen not to destroy the beauty of the timber structure. 'We were very aware that we needed to replicate the materials used elsewhere in the house so any alterations we made would look as seamless as possible,' explains Felicia.

Apart from dramatic blue walls in the gallery area and wet room, the decor mostly features natural timber and chalky white paint. Although the property itself has a unique modern feel, the couple have somehow managed to make their antique pieces work within the space. 'Over the years we've accumulated a vast collection of furniture and paintings, some of which we have inherited or found in auctions or craft fairs,' says Felicia. 'Our taste is very eclectic. Roland is a paintings conservator/restorer and has a great knowledge about antiques, and we're both interested in arts and crafts. It was important that all our treasured pieces would work in the house without making it look or feel too cluttered.'

After 10 years in County Kilkenny, the couple are fully immersed in rural living. 'Leaving Dublin for the countryside has certainly changed our lifestyle and the pace at which we live, says Felicia. 'We're both really pleased we made the decision to move here, and I'm sure we'll never tire of this breathtakingly beautiful house and its idyllic setting.'



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SIMPLICITY BY THE SEA

Mixing the laid-back feel of a Cornish beach house with contemporary influences, Nicky Denvir has created a perfect, uncluttered coastal escape

FEATURE CLAIRE ROBERTS | PHOTOGRAPHY MARK ASHBEE





NEW-BUILD

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Terraced beach house

LOCATION Cornwall

ROOMS Sitting room/kitchen, dining area, utility room, four bedrooms (one en suite), two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2013

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'This is our holiday home,' explains Nicky. 'We also own a property in Oxford.'

DINING AREA

'I was drawn to this space instantly – it's such a sociable setting with lovely views,' says Nicky.

Vitra Eames chairs in Ocean, £332 each, John Lewis.

Morano table, £399, Harveys, is a good match. White rattan Malmo pendant, £140, Habitat

DECORATING TIP *'Keep areas clear and tidy, and resist the temptation to overspend – you shouldn't worry about breakages in a holiday home'*

SITTING ROOM

Warm throws and comfy sofas make this space very inviting.

Mastrella Tobia sofa, from £1,879, Iroka. Trillo rug in grey and yellow, £150, Habitat. Merino and cashmere throw, £130, Heal's



The number 13 might be unlucky for some, but not for Nicky Denvir and her husband, Paul. The couple and their three children, Edward, 15, Alex, 14, and Sophie, 10, had been holidaying in Polzeath, Cornwall and the surrounding area for that amount of years, all the while looking for their perfect holiday retreat.

'I'd almost given up hope of finding somewhere,' says Nicky. 'But one day, a friend was looking at a property in a new development overlooking a small seaside town, and I decided to go along with her.' The group of 11 new-builds were not quite finished but Nicky instantly knew that one of them would be perfect. 'As soon as I saw the open-plan living space and the double-height bay window, I fell in love with its light, modern feel, and the fact that it's a one-minute walk to the beach.'

Match made in heaven

'I always imagined we'd find a rough-and-ready old bungalow, so choosing a modern house that needed no work and was easy to lock up and leave was a bonus,' says Nicky. The three-storey layout also appealed. Having two bedrooms and a bathroom on the lower floor, the living space and kitchen in the middle, then two more bedrooms with two bathrooms right at the top, made it ideal for when the family had friends and relatives to stay.

In addition, when Nicky and Paul first viewed the property, it was not much more than a shell. This meant they could have a say in the kitchen's layout and other details, such as floor finishes, the woodburner and the fitting of an outdoor shower.

At this stage, Claire Alderson of Pebble Design came on board as their interior consultant and helped them personalise the interior. 'Claire is based in Cornwall and has worked on many holiday homes,' says Nicky. 'She understands the flexibility needed in this sort of house and the importance of sourcing modern furnishings that also have a holiday feel.'

A personal touch

The couple needed multi-use bedrooms as their children often bring friends to stay, so bedrooms had to work with single beds that could easily be turned into doubles. Using zip-and-link designs that were then upholstered in denim – with the fun addition of jeans pockets sewn on the headboards for books – or in sandy-coloured linen, stopped the schemes being defined as either childrens' or adults' rooms.

Nicky was keen to add splashes of colour to soften the modern feel. A sleek, white-gloss dining table was lifted with bright chairs, while throws and cushions enhance the varied colour schemes. 'I didn't want to go for the beachy look, but instead I wanted to complement the property's contemporary feel,' says Nicky. 'We love the clean lines, uncluttered spaces and the laid-back Cornish atmosphere the house exudes.'

Two years on, the family use their seaside escape several times a year. They love it as much in winter as in summer, as the house is so cosy and warm. 'I think we've created a relaxed feel,' explains Nicky. 'Children walk in with sandy feet and wetsuits, which is exactly what they should be doing on holiday.'

DECORATING TIP *'Use items that complement the location – I love the surfboards hung on the walls'*



KITCHEN

A sleek, modern design offers ample storage for when the house is filled with guests.

Leonie mixer tap, £109; square flat top door handle, £6.79, both Homebase, are comparable



BEDROOM

Seaside elements create a sense of fun in here.

Salcombe zip link divan base and mattress, £6,200, John Lewis, would work in here. Mid-length surfboard, from £485, Escape Surfboards. Throws, from £130 each, Heal's

BATHROOM

The compact wall-hung furniture here creates the illusion of space.

Mino 600 drawer unit and basin, £299; Edge basin mixer, £129; Euro Mono wall-hung pan, £199, all Bathstore, have this look

MASTER BEDROOM

'I love the vibrant velvet cushions, which add colour to this scheme,' says Nicky.

Piper double bed in Nordic blue brushed cotton, £795, Loaf. Designers Guild Kintore fabric in Marine, £44m, Tangletree Interiors

GUEST BEDROOM

'We chose the decor in here so it would work for both kids and adults,' says Nicky.

Habitat is a good place to source throws like this, from £28 each. Biscuit Toronto eyelet curtains, from £30, Dunelm, are a match



Insight

PLAN A NEW-BUILD

The Denvirs bought off-plan, but if you want to build your own home, read this expert advice

There are many advantages to building your own home, just like the Denvirs have done. Good preparation is a key ingredient of success, however, and it's never too soon to start planning.

Get creative

Developing a new-build allows you to fully express your own design preferences, be they traditional, contemporary or cutting edge, so take time to clearly think about the look you want. Consider how you'd like to tailor your home to suit your lifestyle – whether you're working from home, living with teenagers and/or elderly parents, or in need of extra rooms.

Plan to include as many energy-saving features as you can, such as triple glazing, underfloor heating and an efficient boiler, as all these can save you money. But you'll need to plan for contingencies, as unforeseen costs may arise at any stage. Building a house can also take up to two years or more, so you'll need somewhere to live in the meantime. Finally, think about where your home will be located, and who will design and build it.

Finding a plot can take considerable effort, unless you're lucky enough to own land already. Contact local estate agents and landowners, network with family and friends, and search auction house websites. There are also various plot-finding services such as PlotSearch

on self-build portals like BuildStore (buildstore.co.uk). Alternatively, you could ask your architect to source the plot.

Commission an architect

Using an architect will help you solve design problems and make the most of your budget. Firstly, decide how much help you would like, from producing plans to supervising the whole build, as the range of services on offer varies from one practice to another. Get clear on your own preferences regarding design, light, storage and materials, and set a provisional budget before engaging an architect.

RIBA's *A Client's Guide to Engaging an Architect* (£10, RIBA Publishing) is useful. The first consultation is often free, so interview three or four practices before choosing one. Your architect will then ask you for a detailed brief, which will help them draw up the design for your home.

Obtaining planning permission can be one of the most challenging aspects, and an architect's help will be invaluable. Some people opt to design their own homes and only engage an architect to draw up plans to submit to the planning authorities, but remember, an experienced architect will know which features are most likely to be problematic. New-builds in built-up areas should have minimum impact on neighbouring properties, and plans may be more likely to be approved if they fit with local vernacular architecture.

EXPERT EYE *'When planning a new-build, make sure you have the three basics resolved – plot, architect and contractor. Ensure you've found a location to suit your needs, the best architect to interpret your requirements, and a professional contractor to complete the build. Otherwise the process will not deliver your dream house'*

KEVIN FLOWERS, TFQ ARCHITECTS



PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'It's a good idea to commission your architect to find the plot for you, so they are involved from the start. The plot can inform many details about the build – how it sits in its

environment, what it might look like, and how the interior will connect to the exterior. Your architect will have an eye for how to utilise the raw ingredients, in terms of orientation, light, natural features and using local materials.

In National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, obtaining planning permission can be hard, so try to engage architects local to these areas, as they will be well practised in finding solutions to restrictions. In rural areas, wildlife can have an impact on your plans, and an ecology survey may pre-empt issues at this stage.

Plots near rivers and watercourses may present a flood risk. Carry out a postcode search on the Environment Agency's website.

Recommendations are a great way of finding out an architect's character and design abilities. Employing an architect is an investment that should save you making costly errors and bring value to the project.'

GAVIN WOODFORD, WOODFORD ARCHITECTURE + INTERIORS

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020 7580 5533, architecture.com

The UK's professional body holds a list of chartered architects and offers information and advice to self-builders and homeowners

■ **Planning Portal** planningportal.gov.uk
The UK governments' official online guide to planning and building regulations for England and Wales

STROKE OF GENIUS

*Anna and Rupert Jackson
bought a manor house and
styled the interiors using their
collection of vibrant paintings*

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN
PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT SANDERSON

REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Farmhouse, originally built in 1668

LOCATION Sussex

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, drawing room, dining room, kitchen-diner, study, studio, utility room, five bedrooms (two en suite), two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2002

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We had a villa in France before moving here,' says Anna.

DRAWING ROOM

'This space has wonderful views,' says Anna, 'so we decided against curtains and chose shutters instead.'

Altea lamp base in melon, £125; ivory shade, £36, both India Jane. Vence circle cushion covers, £49 each, Oka. For similar amethyst wine glasses, try William Yeoward Crystal, £55 each



SITTING ROOM
 'Our best decision was taking out the false ceiling to create a double-height space,' says Anna. Lamp bases are made from old balustrades, £160, Kate Forman. Armchairs covered in Chukka linen, £187.50m, De Le Cuona

DESIGN TIP *A bit of mess makes a house feel homely but it's quite easy to*



When Rupert and Anna Jackson sold their property in St Tropez, they were free to look for an English substitute – a bolthole in the country for holidays and weekend breaks. Determined to find something not too far from London, and with three grown-up boys who still occasionally come home at weekends, they needed bedrooms for everyone, plus rooms for entertaining, a study for Rupert and a studio for Anna, an artist. The pair submitted their wish list to a property finder in West Sussex who came up with this striking house.

‘We weren’t planning to buy anything so grand,’ admits Rupert, ‘but the house offered everything we really liked.’ Originally built in the mid-16th-century as a farmhouse with ground-floor space for animals, the property was extended a century or so later with the addition of a French Château-style front, angled to enjoy unspoilt views of the wild and beautiful Sussex Downs.

‘The additions provided a large drawing room and dining room with a grand hall and a sweeping staircase leading to four bedrooms on the two floors above,’ explains Anna. ‘The classic William-and-Mary proportions sit in contrast to the older part of the house, which is very cosy and is



overdo it. I try to de-clutter on a regular basis to keep the house looking fresh’

1 HALL A sweeping staircase creates an imposing entrance.

Walls painted in Slaked Lime absolute matt emulsion, £37.50 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene. The antique mirror came from Cleall Antiques, which has similar designs, from £300. Avignon sideboard, £690, India Jane is comparable

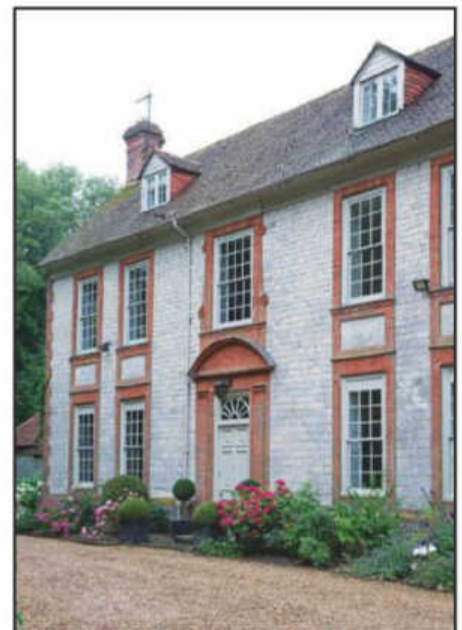
2 KITCHEN Shaker-style painted units are complemented by the striking

modern lighting.

Cabinets, price on request, John Lewis of Hungerford; painted in Light Blue estate eggshell, £55, per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Wharf ceiling pendants, £130 each, Jim Lawrence, are a close match

3 DINING AREA

The large pine table is perfect for informal family gatherings. For a similar-style antique dresser try Lantiques. Nordic House sells large mercury silver candlesticks, £16 each





I

DESIGN TIP
'One lively piece of art can make a room. Walls without paintings are at risk of looking soulless'

characterised by beams and inglenooks. We took down some false ceilings in the older part of the house, which opened up what was the original double-height sitting room and gave us extra light. As you can imagine, we now spend the winter evenings in here snuggled up on the sofa with Pedro, our Cockapoo, who tends to hog the woodburning stove.'

Several period features survived the alterations to the property over the centuries, including original floors, shutters and panelling, which previous owners had carefully restored. 'They obviously appreciated the house as much as we do now,' says Anna.

Early on in the project, Jenny Mort, a designer living locally, came on board to help furnish and redecorate. Anna knew exactly what she wanted but, as she says, 'It was Jenny who knew where to find things, and that was crucial. She sourced original pieces, like the glass coffee table made up of a sheet of thick glass set on stone columns.'

Muted colours consolidate the peaceful atmosphere in the house and provide a perfect backdrop for Anna's own paintings, which are propped up on the mantelpiece, waiting for a permanent position on the walls. 'This house is an ongoing project,' says Anna, 'and I am really enjoying the process – so long may it last.'

1 & 2 GUEST BEDROOM
Tucked under the sloping ceiling, the attic bedroom has a romantic feel. Gosford Berry floral linen, £36m, Laura Ashley, has a similar style as the fabric used for the blind and bedcover

3 BATHROOM
A group of three contemporary pendants adds a contrasting edge. Tenyson pendants, £85 each, Neptune. Chinese Toile wallpaper, £77.40 per roll, Lewis & Wood, is comparable



2



3

MASTER BEDROOM
Large picture windows create a sense of elegance. For a similar brass bed try Canterbury, from £399, Feather & Black. Insignia cushion cover, £45, Oka



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ALL IN GOOD TASTE

FEATURE AMANDER MEADE | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH



KITCHEN-DINER

An assortment of seating and a collection of vintage bottles, jars and crockery generate a hospitable atmosphere.

Cabinets painted in Old White estate eggshell, £55 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Selling Antiques has a range of rocking chairs, from £195

Janet and Andrew Mogridge gently renovated their period farmhouse, resulting in a warm family home with a timeless quality



INSPIRING

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Victorian farmhouse

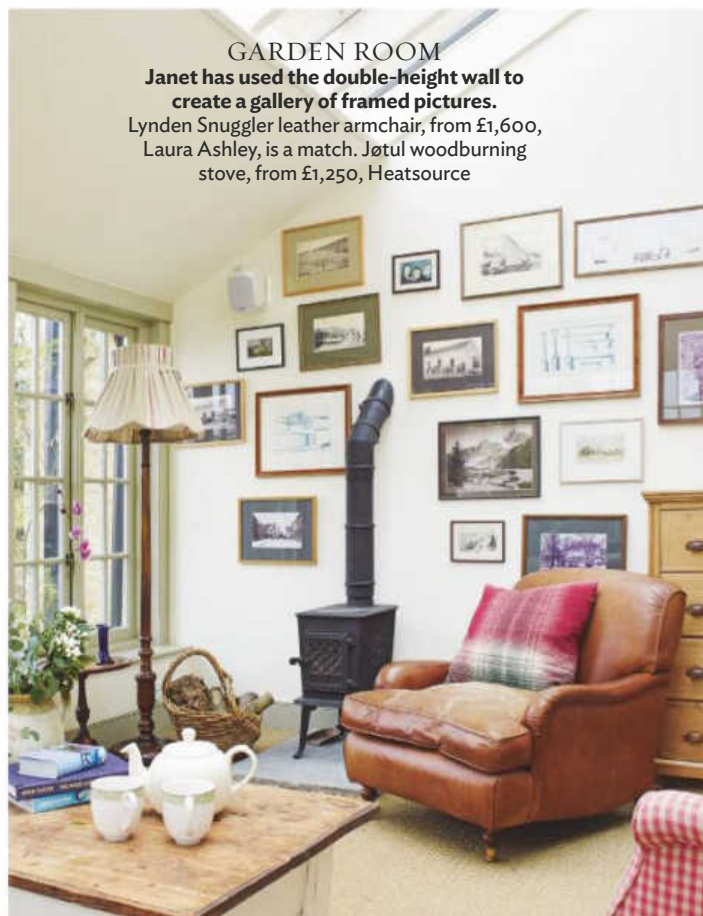
LOCATION Lincolnshire

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, family room, kitchen-diner, study, garden room, utility room, five bedrooms (one en suite), two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2008

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a thatched cottage in a nearby village,' says Janet.



GARDEN ROOM

Janet has used the double-height wall to create a gallery of framed pictures.

Lynden Snuggler leather armchair, from £1,600, Laura Ashley, is a match. Jøtul woodburning stove, from £1,250, Heatsource



SITTING ROOM

The calm colour palette creates a restful sanctuary in this space.

Armchair covered in Plain Check in Stone, £465q m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. Try John Lewis for a similar gold overmantel mirror, £200

Although Janet and Andrew Mogridge loved their thatched cottage in rural Lincolnshire, they had three children approaching their teens, so buying a bigger property made sense. 'When we found out a farmhouse we'd always admired was for sale, we snapped it up,' says Janet.

The previous owners had left the house in good repair but the Mogridges were keen to put their own stamp on it and restore some of the character that had been lost. As she regularly entertains friends and family, Janet felt that the kitchen was a priority but the couple were struggling to blend their ideas into a workable plan, so they approached their designer friend Lyn Venables to assist them. 'Lyn's input was invaluable,' says Janet. 'She filtered the best ideas from each of us and showed us how the space could work much better.'

The couple inherited a Shaker-style kitchen with marble worktops and a range cooker, which they decided not to replace. 'We couldn't justify a whole new kitchen but we did remove some of the wall-mounted units and a central island, which we decided to exchange for an antique cupboard,' says Janet. 'In addition, we changed the handles and also painted the cabinetry for a personal touch.' The couple also opted to seek out individual antique chairs for a more eclectic feel. The kitchen now has two distinct zones for cooking and

dining but window dressings and wall colours in shades of oatmeal and white helped to establish an easy flow throughout the room.

Janet and Andrew are enthusiastic gardeners and undertook major landscaping work at the same time as the interior renovation took place. A refurbished garden room not only extends the living space beyond the kitchen, but allows the couple to enjoy wonderful views of their planting outside. With woodwork painted in a soft neutral and a logburner installed, as well as lots of comfortable seating, this room is one of Janet's favourite places to relax – light and bright in the summer, cosy and snug in the cooler months.

Throughout the rest of the house, Lyn's advice was to use plenty of natural materials with soothing colours to create a relaxed, homely atmosphere. Farrow & Ball's muted tones were the perfect solution with Old White becoming a firm favourite. Off the entrance hall, the couple decided to divide a large, soulless sitting area into two better-appointed rooms. 'Most people are taking out walls these days,' says Janet, 'but two rooms offered us much more flexibility.'

Comfortable furniture, soft lighting and beautiful fabrics create a traditional English country look. 'The house now lends itself to being full of family and friends or equally well to quieter times,' reflects Janet. 'There's a synchronicity now that is perfect for us.'

DESIGN TIP

'I would recommend a designer to help you plan a scheme. Lyn helped us visualise the project as a whole, which resulted in great continuity'



MASTER BEDROOM
Feminine touches and a luxurious throw provide a comfortable, intimate feel. Tosca bed, £725, Feather & Black, is a match for this one. Fisher Halogen pendant, £69, Jim Lawrence. Brown striped faux-fur throw, £120, House of Fraser, has the same look



MASTER EN SUITE
A roll-top bath takes centre stage in what was the old attic. Cast-iron bath painted in Down Pipe estate eggshell, £55 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



GUEST ROOM
An eye-catching wallpaper on a feature wall adds depth to an otherwise neutral scheme. Love Letter wallpaper, £58 per roll, Andrew Martin. Ursula throw, £20, Ikea, is similar



GUEST BEDROOM
Fresh and floral is the theme here. Antique Rose Bouquet bedspread, £145, Cath Kidston



ORIENT SUCCESS

When Malcolm and Elaine Wilde returned home from living abroad, they designed their new flat with a pinch of Asian flair

FEATURE PENNY BOTTING | PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT SANDERSON

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Ground-floor apartment

LOCATION

Southwest London

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, cloakroom, two bedrooms (both en suite)**PURCHASED** 2012**PREVIOUS PROPERTY**

'We moved here from a flat a few floors upstairs,' says Malcolm.



SITTING ROOM

'The beautiful painting of the Vietnamese landscape is my favourite item,' says Elaine.

Kang-style coffee table in warm elm, £713, Amazon, would suit this space. Late 19th-century armchair, £800, The French House. The Hulanicki Art Nouveau fireplace is comparable, £2,475, Chesney's



KITCHEN
Black and timber combine for a modern-classic look.
 Bespoke units from the Osea range by Plain English. Walls painted in Welcome Deep intelligent matt emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene



DINING ROOM
'We commissioned a blacksmith in Sussex to make the pendant light,' says Malcolm.
 Bespoke chandelier in bronze by James Price. Dining chairs upholstered in linen, £395 each, Orchid, are similar to these ones



GUEST BEDROOM
The wardrobe was custom-made to match a design Elaine had seen.
 Shimu's black ceramic stool, £195, has this look

Malcolm and Elaine Wilde had owned a three-bedroom flat on the top floor of a smart building in southwest London for 10 years before they decided to sell it. 'The apartment was only really used by our grown-up children or when we visited from Asia, where I was working at the time,' says Malcolm. 'So when we moved back to the UK permanently, we felt somewhere with fewer but larger rooms would suit us better, and preferably not on the third floor.'

Then one day the pair got chatting to the owners of the ground-floor flat in the same building. 'The lovely French couple told us they were selling their place and had

a potential buyer but that the sale was a bit rocky,' recalls Malcolm. 'And when they later suggested that they would sell it to us if we could match the previous offer and exchange quickly, we agreed without hesitation.'

In the meantime, Malcolm and Elaine put their own flat on the market and once both sales went through, work began on changing their new home to suit their needs. 'After we had secured all the necessary paperwork, including five party wall agreements, we totally gutted the place, removing some of the walls and sacrificing a bedroom to open up the spaces for a more airy feel,' explains Malcolm. 'We also took up floors and tore down ceilings, adding

LESSON
LEARN'T

'Although we were unsure at first, we're glad we kept the master en suite open plan as it works so well'



MASTER EN SUITE

A polished aluminium freestanding roll-top tub adds an air of luxury.

Astonia Epoca bath, from £4,865, Aston Matthews. Maranello black porcelain floor tiles, from £29sq m, Mandarin Stone

insulation for warmth and sound-proofing. The structural work was a bit nerve-racking at times, because if anything had gone wrong the whole property could have fallen down. In fact, one of the builders did accidentally knock through to next door's fireplace, and an unattended hose leaked water into the basement flat. It was all very stressful.'

With the building work complete, the couple started on the decor. 'Because we were living in Singapore at the time, we enlisted the help of an interior designer. 'A few different people were recommended to us, one of whom was Andrew Orr,' says Malcolm. 'His ideas were a little quirky, but that really appealed to us.' Having lived

in Asia for 15 years, the Wildes had collected a lot of furniture and treasured mementoes.

'We would send Andrew photos of the items we wanted to include in the scheme, such as the rattan-topped coffee table and the lacquered Chinese cabinet beside the fireplace, and he would then work around them.' In terms of colour, Elaine naturally gravitated towards a soft, muted palette. 'I tend to go for blues and greys, which we've used quite a lot,' she says.

Now that Malcolm and Elaine have permanently relocated back to the UK, they are very settled in their stylish and spacious home. 'We love every aspect of the flat,' says Malcolm. 'It's pretty near perfect for us.' 25



MASTER BEDROOM

'We love the sense of calm here, as well as the garden view,' says Elaine.
Wall paint, Gauze Dark matt emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene



DISTINCTIVE

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Grade II listed detached 15th-century barn

LOCATION Herefordshire

ROOMS Kitchen, dining room, living room, laundry room, cloakroom, four bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom

RENTED Since 2013

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We used to live in a 1950s beach house in Melbourne,' says Clair.



DINING ROOM

Clair has indulged her love of the Mid-Century look here with a sleek white table and vibrant wishbone chairs.

Fritz Hansen Super Elliptical dining table, from £1,550, Utility Design. The replica Hans Wegner Wishbone dining chair, from £117, Swivel UK, is comparable



BARN BEAUTIFUL

1&4 SITTING ROOM

A reading nook offers a quiet spot to relax in this space where soft pastels and pops of hot pink create a fresh feel. Try the Strind table, £100, Ikea. Pink Impala painting, £350; cushion covers, from £24 each, all Curio & Curio. Try the replica Foscarini Twiggy floor lamp, from £460, Jas Boutique

2 DINING ROOM

Clair has created a sewing area in this corner, complete with a vintage Singer. Finnvard trestle legs, £25 each; Klimpen white table top, from £60, all Ikea. White resin deer head, £35, Cox & Cox

3 KITCHEN

This cosy spot has windows on three sides with access out to the garden.

Antique Oak timber kitchen, from £2,702, Wren Kitchens, is comparable. Try the natural black slate tiles, £23sq m, The Stone and Tile Company, for a similar look



3



4

Interior decorator Clair Wayman and artist Nick Young brought a fresh, colourful Australian vibe to a rustic barn conversion in the heart of rural Herefordshire

After living and working in Melbourne, Australia for 11 years, decorator and homewares designer Clair Wayman and her partner Nick Young decided it was time for a new start, upping sticks and moving back to Britain in the winter of 2013.

The pair spent a few short weeks hunting for rural rental properties before spotting a charming, character-filled Grade II listed barn conversion in a sleepy hamlet near Hereford. 'We were yearning for a quieter pace of life,' explains Clair. 'And we fell in love with this cosy, timber-framed barn, which is surrounded by fields and horse paddocks.'

'I remember looking at pictures of the house online and being seduced by its irregular beams and unusually shaped rooms – it made me think of Hansel and Gretel's cottage or a hobbit's house,' says Clair. The couple found themselves signing a rental lease straightaway. 'We'd viewed a lot of cramped country cottages, but we prefer barn conversions, as they're more spacious and interesting.'

The barn had been sensitively revived by its current owner in 2007. 'Originally, the derelict structure was only waist-high,' says Clair. 'But the owner had the vision to see how beautiful it could be. She added a second floor, in keeping with the bones of the building, and undertook a seamless restoration. In the sitting room, notches in the ceiling beams indicate where the animal pens would have been during the building's working life.'

Having worked as a magazine stylist, interior decorator and homewares designer for many years, Clair has a keen eye for interiors. 'I love to mix and



DECORATING TIP *'I like to start a scheme with one amazing, patterned item. Then I work everything else around it, picking out two colours that are then repeated around the room'*

match styles so I knew the rustic beams, wooden floors and dark slate tiles would be a great backdrop for our colourful, modernist 1950s furniture,' she explains. Inspired by life down under, Clair's style has become brighter and more eye-catching, and she was keen to inject colour and pattern into her new English home. Colourful recovered vintage chairs, cowhides, modular sofas, bright cushions and bold artwork by Nick lend a contemporary feel, with modern pieces and chunky beams acting as the perfect foil for each other. The aged wood, pitted with marks, brings character and warmth to the space, while the clean lines of the furniture add an edgy, stylish vibe. 'One of our neighbours commented that it's the funkiest barn for miles around,' says Clair.

Having moved halfway around the world to settle here, Nick and Clair have no regrets. 'After spending most of my adult life in busy cities, living here and reconnecting with nature has been the perfect tonic,' says Clair. 🍷





STUDIO

When choosing the barn, one of the deciding factors was this separate workspace in the garden. White metal PS cabinet, £70; Helmer white drawer unit on casters, £25, both Ikea



4



BEDROOM

Clair positioned the bed under the skylight so overnight guests can gaze up at the stars on a clear night. Double Duken bed frame, £135; white Selje bedside table, £50; PS 2014 handmade flat woven rug, £120, all Ikea. Multi-coloured Feather Zig Zag cushion cover, Curio & Curio

1 & 3 MASTER BEDROOM

White bedding and a pale mint metal bedside table create a clean, fresh look.

Powder coated steel Vetre bedside table in turquoise with casters, £25, Ikea. 3D Kids acrylic paintings, £95, Curio & Curio. Eames-style white RAR Eiffel rocking chair, £53, My Furniture

2 BEDROOM

Large polka-dot bedlinen and a vintage bedside table painted turquoise add bright, lively feel in this space.

Malm double bed, £186, Ikea. Colour Blocking cushion cover, £29, Curio & Curio

4 BATHROOM

Clair has introduced a splash of colour against the dramatic dark floor tiles with a vibrant orange stool.

The Cambridge bath with traditional resin feet is comparable, £599, Bathstore. For a similar-style stool try the Frosta, £8, Ikea



THE SOURCE

Erica Miller shows how you can achieve the style secrets in this issue's homes

Design ideas



UNIQUE DISPLAYS



Pages
26-30

Jocelyn Land opted to display skeins of colourful fabric on the wall of her master bedroom, which is a refreshing departure from the usual collection of framed pictures.

Grouped together, they create a curious and colourful focal point. An attractive patterned wallpaper adds further visual interest to this dynamic scheme. Unique and unusual ideas such as this can really elevate your interiors from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Here, a selection of pretty plates have been hung to create a quirky display above the bed. The dramatic dark blue background ensures that the plates become a stand-out feature of the room. Chinese Garden double duvet cover, £89; Oxford pillowcases, £35 a pair, both Christy.

PERSONAL TOUCHES



Pages
44-47

Houses with surprises are often the most interesting ones to visit. In the Joneses' home, skateboarding is a passion and they have turned it into a feature.

A favourite pastime often comes with equipment, and if storage is an issue then putting it on display makes sense. In the Joneses' case a trio of bright skateboards look striking above the fireplace. Highly original in approach, this display gives their home a distinct sense of style. Music also plays a huge role in most peoples' lives and can hold great memories. Here, a personal wall of fame featuring album covers has been created. These frames allow you to curate your own collection of vinyl records. Black album cover frames, £12 each, The Contemporary Home.

ARTISTIC DECORATIONS



Pages
60-63

An arrangement of photos displayed creatively is a great way of allowing the walls in your home to tell your history. A handpicked selection of memories and miscellaneous items have been fastened to the wall

above the sofa in the Bodtcher-Hansen's sitting room, filling the space with a gentle lived-in aura. Before attaching anything to your walls, place pictures on the floor and move them around until you find a display that you like. Here, two complementary shades of blue have been used to create a subtle panel effect above a mantelpiece. Within the panel, a group of postcards and a single feather have been hung on the wall. Main wall painted in Blue Clay; panel painted in Airplane Blue, both matt emulsion, £40 per 2.5 litres, Sanderson.

Inspired shopping



Antler pendant

If you covet the stylish antler pendant in Claire Bending's sitting room, follow her example with Wayfair's Antler 17-light candle chandelier, £1,325.

Pages 32-35



Contemporary kitchen lighting

The Wilde's have hung a modern statement light above their kitchen island for a chic look. For similar, invest in the D-leather pendant, £1,794, Holloways of Ludlow.

Pages 88-91



Mono plates

A trio of black-and-white plates lend personality to Jocelyn Land's kitchen wall. Recreate this look with Amara's Fornasetti Tema e Variazioni wall plate no.363, £125.



Pages 26-30



Traditional quarry tiles

Rustic quarry tiles add charm to the Mogridge's dining room. Get this look with the Traditional Red quarry tiles, £12.95sq m, Walls and Floors.



Pages 84-87



Pages 32-35

Buttoned dining chair

When choosing dining chairs, Claire Bending considered both comfort and aesthetics. Sweetpea & Willow's Rebecca low-back chairs, £495 a pair, are a good alternative.



Modern bar stool

Caroline Green's sleek bar stools are very on trend. Cult Furniture's Detroit stool with its metal frame and rustic seat, £89, would work just as well.



Pages 20-25

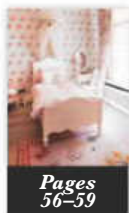


Pages 60-63

Glazed door display cabinet

If you admire the clean lines of the Bødtcher-Hansens' display cabinet, then you're sure to be impressed by the Nox sideboard in solid walnut, £6,966, Wharfedale.

Inspired shopping



Pages
56-59

Multi-arm chandelier

A stylish chandelier creates a focal point in the Wildes' formal sitting room. For something akin to this try Jim Lawrence's Florentine light with a beeswax finish, £471.



Pages
88-91

Feminine rugs

Pretty, girly prints look great in Marieke van Mameren's daughter's room. Recreate this scheme with Esprit's Back To Flower Power rug, from £119, Modern Rugs.



Pages
79-82

Painted rustic dining table

If you admire the classic, honest design of the Jacksons' table, then take a look at the Florence cream birch dining table, £425, Alexander & Pearl.

Enamel canisters

A row of glossy red jars take pride of place in Caroline Green's kitchen. For something similar try the Vintage three-piece canister set, £17, Prestige.



Pages
20-25



Pages
38-42

Dining bench

Elegant church pews have been used as benches in the Wilsons' ecclesiastical home. If you're unable to source original pews, try I & JL Brown's three panel box settle, £5,250.



Pages
92-95

Lattice coffee table

At the heart of Clair Wayman's sitting room is an intricate lattice-pattern coffee table. For a distinctive design like this, try the Clover table in mango wood with a glass top, £269, Swoon Editions.

loaf



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DINING AREA
Contrasting floral patterns add impact here. Tradition chair in Anise Green, £89.99, Maisons du Monde, is similar. Marcelle pedestal extending dining table, £1,200, John Lewis, would suit this scheme

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Traditional 1920s house

LOCATION

Forserum, Sweden

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, three bedrooms, two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2005

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We used to live in an apartment in the middle of town,' says Mia.

LOOK OF LOVE

Mia and Jon Peterson's use of bold pattern and calm neutrals has created a warm family home

FEATURE GEORGIE LANE-GODFREY | **PHOTOGRAPHY** MIGUEL VARANDA
STYLING MALIN HOLMUDD AND LINDA AGNESUND



KITCHEN

White units and a black granite worktop create a sleek look. Ralph Lauren Ashfield floral wallpaper, £74 per roll, John Lewis. Stanley small pendant, £249, Original BTC, is a close match



SITTING ROOM

A checked wallpaper adds texture to this retro-inspired room. Ralph Lauren Egerton Plaid wallpaper, £47 per roll, John Lewis. Hektar floor lamp, £39, Ikea. Velvet Tub chair, £445, Oliver Bonas, has a similar look. Etsy sells a comparable selection of kilim cushions, from £27

When it comes to buying a home, most people like to shop around. However, for Mia and Jon Peterson, house hunting proved to be a case of love at first sight. 'I was pregnant with our first child at the time, and as soon as we walked into this traditional 1920s house, I burst into tears because I knew we'd found our forever home,' says Mia. 'It was the first property we'd viewed, but that didn't stop us buying it straight away.'

Ten years later and the same house is now also home to the couple's three children, Moa, 10, and twins My and Love, 7. Over the last decade, Mia and Jon have made plenty of improvements to the house, such as putting in new floors and windows, renovating the bathroom and redecorating each room. And, while they may have been impulsive when they bought the house, their approach to decorating has been quite different as they've taken time to consider every change they've made. 'I think it's important that you don't hurry these things,' says Mia. 'It's much better to wait and choose something you really love and that's going to last – particularly with wallpaper, which isn't easy to change.'

When it came to making decisions about the design and decor of the house, Mia trusted her own instincts. In the kitchen she took her time over choosing a wallpaper





that would complement the white units and black granite worktop. 'I knew that I wanted it to have impact,' she explains, 'so I was delighted when I found this floral design because it gave me a classic look that was still contemporary – I think Ralph Lauren wallpapers are especially good for achieving that.'

Upstairs, Mia went for a more playful look, choosing an unusual cross-stitch floral pattern for the main bedroom and allowing Moa to pick a striking blue design for her room. For the twins' room, the challenge was to find a balance that would suit both genders without losing personality. 'We tried to keep this room neutral but with pops of colour and texture,' explains Mia. Wooden cladding adds interest to a plain white wall, while wallpaper featuring multi-coloured stars keeps the room from feeling too minimal.

Colour plays an important part in Mia's interior style, bringing a touch of vibrancy to her base of crisp white walls and wooden floors. 'I love mixing shades and seeing what works together without the overall look becoming too loud,' says Mia. 'I don't think you should be afraid of adding colour to your home. If you don't want to commit to buying furniture, try choosing a few coloured cushions instead to introduce some brighter

DESIGN TIPS *'Take your time over how you want your home to look. It's better to be patient*



MASTER BEDROOM

'I wanted this space to feel romantic but not twee, so this cross-stitch floral pattern felt like a good compromise,' says Mia.

Rose Multi wallpaper, £62 per roll, Mimou. Idolf chair, £45, Ikea, is a good alternative



BATHROOM

Mia used white tiles in the north-facing bathroom to prevent it from feeling too dark.

Godmorgan washstand, from £200, Ikea, is similar. Linear white matt tiles, £63.67sq m, Topps Tiles, are a close match

accents. This is a great way of starting off gradually with small amounts of colour or pattern before you're confident enough to move onto something bigger.'

While colour is the main theme running through Mia's interiors, her furnishings are an eclectic assortment of old and new. Primarily sourced from Jon's furniture company, Home Line, these pieces are regularly swapped for new ones, which means that the family's home is constantly evolving. 'If, like me, you prefer to change your interiors frequently, then stick with a neutral base,' says Mia. 'For example, white walls make it easier to alter the accent colours in a room.' In this way, Mia can continually trial new schemes to see which shades work best. 'Rugs are a great way to tie colours together in a room, so I always use one as the basis of my scheme,' she says.

Although her interiors are ever changing, Mia hopes that one final piece of structural work to the house will make it feel complete. 'The twins have decided that they'd each like to have a room to themselves now, so our next plan is to extend the living space and add another bedroom on top of that,' says Mia. 'However, they still want to be next door to each other, so once again it's going to be a totally family-focused design.'

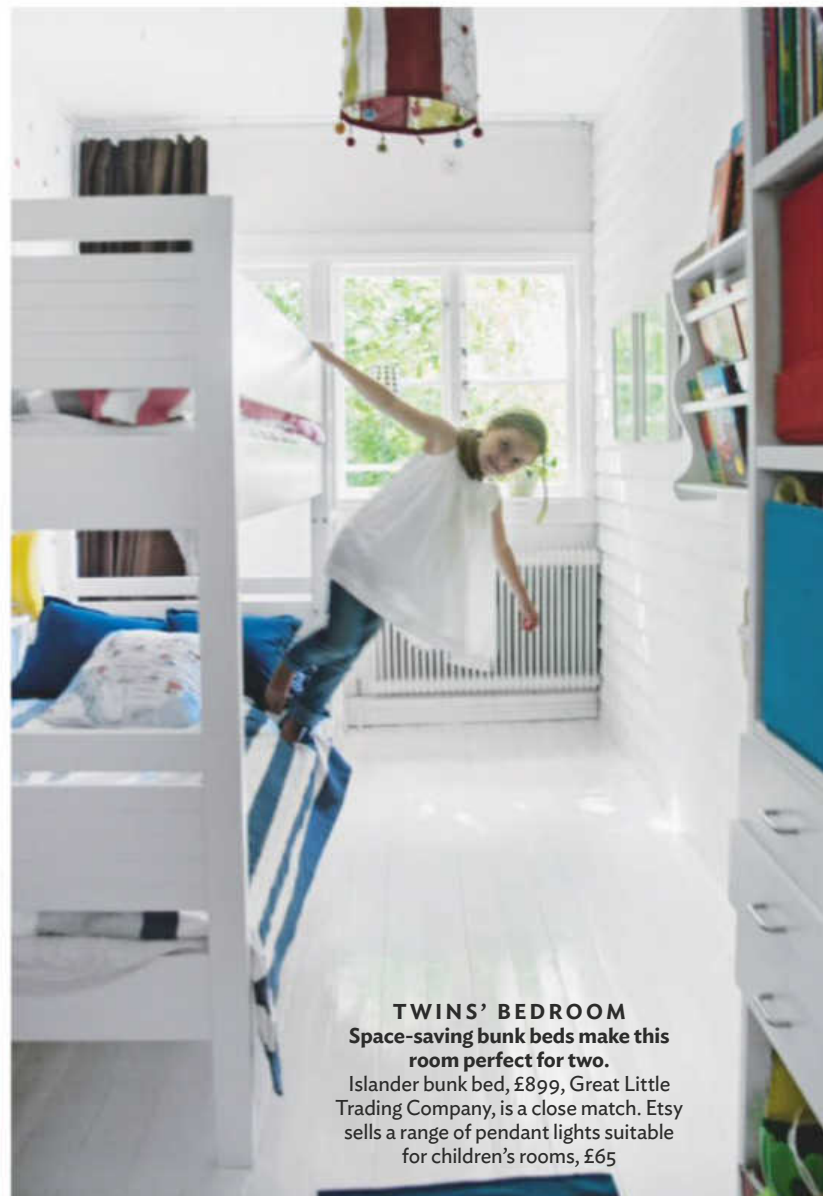


and find something you really like, as it's not very easy to change things like wallpaper'



MOA'S BEDROOM

Patterned wallpaper makes a bold statement. Pip Studio Flowers in the Mix wallpaper, £65 per roll, Amara. For similar crochet bedspreads, try Notonthehighstreet.com, £95



TWINS' BEDROOM

Space-saving bunk beds make this room perfect for two. Islander bunk bed, £899, Great Little Trading Company, is a close match. Etsy sells a range of pendant lights suitable for children's rooms, £65

BE INSPIRED BY MIA AND JON'S HOME



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HALL
A glazed staircase enhances light.
Bespoke staircase with ash handrails by Dunlop Homes



DINING ROOM
'The low-hanging pendants can be dimmed to whatever light level suits the mood,' says Anna. Try the Mantra M1490 Palma pendant, £81, Lights2go. Ligne Roset Fin chair, £100, Rankins

LOCATION, LOCATION

Moving home wasn't really part of Anna and Jamie McMillen's plan until they fell for the spectacular views a spacious new-build offered

FEATURE MANDI MILLAR | PHOTOGRAPHY ASHLEY MORRISON



FAMILY ROOM
'The strong wall colour works well because it's so bright and spacious in here,' says Anna. Wall painted in Pelt estate emulsion, £39.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Coffee and console set, £1,000, Gillespie & Wilson. Rolf Benz 684 pouffe, £500, Houseworks



NEW-BUILD



KITCHEN

Glossy floor tiles create a sleek, contemporary finish, while uniting the work and relaxing zones.

Floor tiles, £45sq m, Ceko Flooring. Cabinetry, £24,000, Design House

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached new-build house

LOCATION

Hollywood, County Down

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen/family room, study/playroom, utility room, garden room, cloakroom, five bedrooms (all en suite)

PURCHASED 2005
PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived in a much smaller bungalow nearby in North Down,' says Anna.

1 SITTING ROOM

The style of furniture and muted tones create a cosy retro vibe.

Sofa, £6,000; pouffe, £1,000, both B&B Italia at Tom Caldwell Gallery. Built-in woodburning stove, £3,500, Mournie Fires. White coffee pot, £60, Wedgwood

2 MASTER EN SUITE

A clever layout gets the maximum out of this compact shower room.

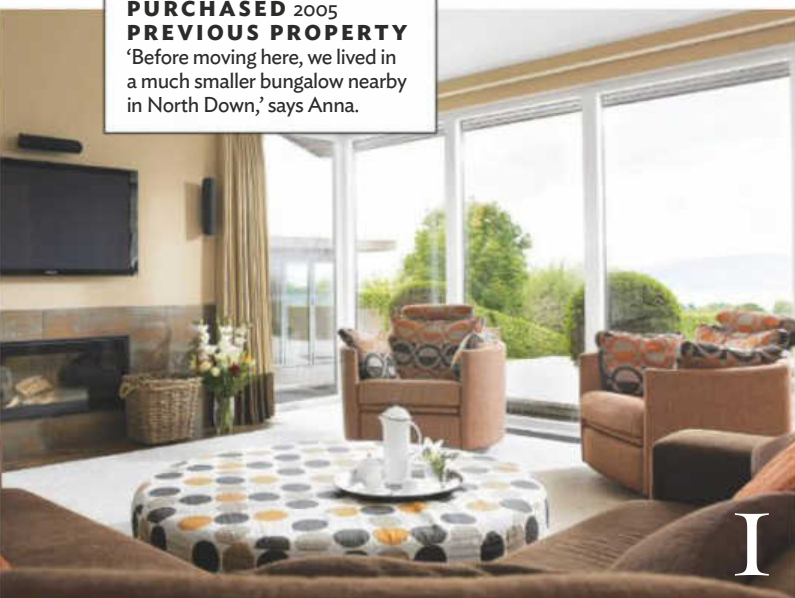
Duravit vanity unit, £445; ceramic floor tiles, £30sq m, both Porcelanosa

3 GUEST BEDROOM

Anna couldn't resist the Dawn

Crothers bunny painting when it came up at auction. 'I knew it would be perfect for in here, and it's always a talking point when people stay over,' she says.

Artwork, £500 (unframed), Dawn Crothers. Purity bedstead, £1,000; side table, £250, both Gilbert Logan



I



2



It was while was helping her brother relocate from Northern Ireland to Dublin that Anna McMillen and husband Jamie caught the moving bug. 'We hadn't even

been thinking about changing home but we soon found ourselves packing up,' explains Anna. 'At that stage, I was pregnant with our first child, so it seemed like a good idea to look for more room than the bungalow we were living in offered us.'

The couple had always loved the quaint village of Holywood in County Down, which is close to central Belfast and family. With a healthy budget, they had their pick of homes, and it was the spectacular views from this house that quickly singled it out as 'the one'.

'We wanted a modern and spacious place and this property ticked those boxes, but also the views over Belfast Lough to the County Antrim coastline were breathtaking,' says

Anna. 'The house was a new-build and was at first-fix stage so it was the best of both worlds – we had the luxury of a bespoke house without all the hassle of a self-build. The timing was also perfect because we'd be in and settled before Archie was born.'

Once into their family home, Anna and Jamie were able to start personalising it. 'Our style is quite contemporary but comfortable,' explains Anna. 'Our world revolves around our children, Archie, 10, Robbie, 8, and Sophie, 3, so the house has evolved as the family has expanded. Every room is child-friendly, relaxed and inviting. We love the open-plan living and entertaining areas, which let the whole house flow as one.'

In the past decade, the interiors have undergone plenty of upgrades. 'At first we did all the decorating ourselves,' says Anna. 'We started off playing it safe, but over the years, we've discovered what we like and what works in the space through trial and error,

adding bold colours and feature walls.

I enjoy trawling the internet and magazines for ideas and inspiration, and love finding contrasting tones that complement one another and using them together in the same space. I suppose it's just about taking your time and finding what suits.'

Anna and Jamie also improved their outdoor areas. 'We wanted to soften the approach to the house and bought an ornate pine cloud tree and some ball hedge trees that we felt really pulled it all together,' says Anna. 'We also priced a landscaped rear garden but the cost of the plans alone ate up the entire budget. So we went for a garden room instead – that way we can use it year round.'

Day-to-day life is spent in the spacious open-plan kitchen. 'Then, come the weekend, we like to close ourselves off in the lounge, light the fire, and watch TV or play the piano,' says Anna. 'The house is very flexible and just seems to suit our family needs so well.' 25

DECORATING ADVICE

*'If you're not confident
with colour, introduce
it on a single wall or
via soft furnishings'*



3



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SMALL ON SPACE BIG ON STYLE

Two different looks meld seamlessly in Kate Francis and Jo Hudson's compact but contemporary city flat

FEATURE HANNAH BULLIVANT | PHOTOGRAPHY KRISTY NOBLE



DISTINCTIVE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Converted factory, built in 1853

LOCATION East London

ROOMS Sitting room/dining room, kitchen, mezzanine bedroom, bathroom

PURCHASED 2009

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We were living in our own separate places in London before we moved in here together,' says Kate.

SITTING ROOM

Three cuttings from *The Financial Times* hang above the sofa – they were a present from Kate to Jo.

Three-seater Chester sofa, £1,500, Habitat. Large Bow floor lamp, £99, Made. Chairs upholstered in Bala plain fabric in Opal, £15m, John Lewis



KITCHEN

Exposed lightbulbs complement the industrial feel of the converted factory.

Hammarp oak worktops, from £100, Ikea. Light, from £17.99, Dowsing & Reynolds. Misty Fjord bevelled marble tiles, £91.48sq m, Topps Tiles

**I never read.
I just look
at pictures.**

Andy Warhol

**Moderna Museet,
Stockholm Sweden
10/2-17/3 1968**

When Kate Francis and her partner Jo Hudson decided to move in together, they had quite a few decisions to make. 'We had to figure out how we'd merge all of our possessions and create a space where we'd both feel at home,' explains Kate. 'Jo would love to live in a white box, whereas I'm drawn to anything that's made from wood. But somehow, we've managed to blend our two styles and create a well-balanced interior.'

As soon as they found this apartment in a converted factory in London, they couldn't wait to update the place to suit their tastes. 'We ripped the whole kitchen out and started again,' says Kate. 'All that was left were a few pipes sticking out of the wall.' The couple relocated the fridge freezer and oven from one side to the opposite corner, new units were installed, a local carpenter was commissioned to make the kitchen doors, and the worktops were replaced. 'The pièce de résistance was our Belfast sink – it was a last-minute addition, but it made a huge difference to the look of the room. We also had the floor sanded and treated to lighten it,' she adds.

'Jo spent ages choosing the worktop and tiles,' says Kate. 'In the end, she came across some marble tiles that she instantly fell in love with, and they really complemented the kitchen. It was quite hard for me

DINING AREA

Occasionally, Kate and Jo work from home, and the large dining table is the ideal space for this.

Mark Harris Tampa solid oak dining table, £1,396, Choice Furniture Superstore. Photographic pendant lights, £90 each, Habitat





BEDROOM

Casually placed belongings create an informal feel.
Bentwood ash bed, £325, Muji. Bob stripe bedlinen, from £10, John Lewis. Circles print, £25, Seventy Tree. Vintage metal oak central wall light, £64.99, Dowsing & Reynolds



BATHROOM

The surprise pop of orange in the towels adds a little verve to this otherwise neutral space.

Yddingen single wash basin in white, £70, Ikea. Core white ceramic wall tiles, £15 for a pack of eight, B&Q. Rustic black slate floor tile, £29.96sq m, Topps Tiles, would work well in here

to envisage the end product at times, but as the shelves and tiles went up, I began to see her vision.'

At just 76sq m, the flat is quite small, but the space has been used very efficiently. 'We didn't hire an architect or use CAD software,' says Kate. 'It was all down to Jo's design eye.' Aside from the kitchen, two glass balconies from the mezzanine bedroom were replaced with a wall for added privacy, a door was removed, huge bookcases were put up, and the flat was painted white. But it was the addition of carefully selected furniture that made the biggest difference. 'When we started to fill the flat with our most loved items, it finally felt cosy,' says Kate.

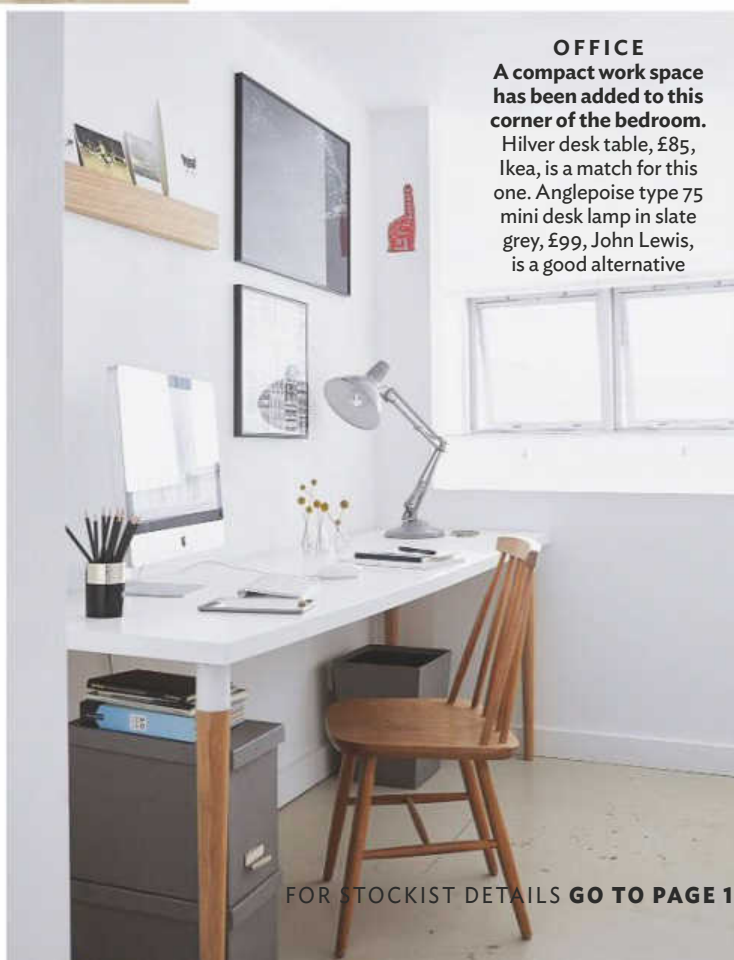
The space now has multiple functions as a home, an office and a place to entertain. 'We're a sociable household and we enjoy hosting dinner parties,' says Kate. 'We can squeeze eight people around our dining table and have spent many a merry evening there.'

Kate and Jo have proved that it's possible to add personality, but not clutter, to a small space. 'We wanted it to be a homely and relaxing environment,' explains Jo. The couple's use of light tones, white walls and a few plants has ensured that the balance between openness and warmth looks simply perfect. 25

OFFICE

A compact work space has been added to this corner of the bedroom.

Hilver desk table, £85, Ikea, is a match for this one. Anglepoise type 75 mini desk lamp in slate grey, £99, John Lewis, is a good alternative



Insight

HOW TO CREATE DISPLAY STORAGE

Inspired by Kate and Jo's statement shelving units? Think big for creative solutions to your storage needs



Adequate storage can make or break an interior. Cupboards to hide lots of paperwork and drawers to stow away everyday paraphernalia are essential in creating a sense of order. But designers are increasingly spotting the potential of storage and shelving for statement displays.

Start as you mean to go on

As in Kate Francis and Jo Hudon's airy home, with its bank of simple white shelves mounted on utilitarian brackets, storage not only has a functional purpose but an aesthetic rationale. Before investing in a particular style of storage, it's worth considering the property's overall look. For instance, a timeworn, French armoire might look great in a country setting or in an apartment where the scheme is deliberately mismatched – but a minimalist space might call for the sleek lines and glossy finishes of modern units.

Think about what you need to store: Can anything be taken to the charity shop? What is best hidden away? What

can be used decoratively or for display? Made-to-measure designs are ideal in alcoves and awkward nooks, but don't dismiss more cost-effective options, which can add character. Vintage crates can be repurposed to form offbeat shelving and worn gymnasium lockers look great in an eclectic scheme. A good joiner should be able to modify second-hand furniture – adding shelves or rails if required.

Eye-catching display tips

Floor-to-ceiling units make an arresting statement, particularly on a blank wall or in a lofty entrance hall. It can be used to enhance the sense of height in the room and create the illusion of space. Painting cabinetry a bold shade can have a dramatic effect, while white or off-black are effective backdrops for display.

Create a focal point by organising items in a particular order for maximum impact: colour-code novels, showcase oversized books and vinyls front-on to draw the eye, and cluster collections of similar items for a carefully curated look.

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'More and more, storage is used as a feature. In loft apartments, it can divide up a large space, and shelving can be used to display not only books, but also flowers, sculptures or artwork.'

Think about how to enhance the impact of your collections – whether fine porcelain or a hoard of LPs. Consider glazed door fronts and lighting recessed into cabinets for maximum effect – and opt for a mix of concealed storage and open displays, which enables you to rotate pieces.

Buying modular furniture means that you can adapt your storage requirements as your needs change. A cabinet for toddler's toys can be repurposed as a bookcase as a child grows.

Bold yellows, reds and oranges are very popular and provide a dramatic focal point. At USM, we have a palette of 14 standard colours, so someone who purchased a unit when the company was established in 1965, can still add to it today with new modules.

Avoid the temptation to buy too cheaply. It's worth investing in furniture that will stand the test of time and offer flexibility. Some of our customers opt for open shelving and add doors and drop-down flaps later on; others decide to switch the colour of door panels when they rework a scheme or move house.'

IAN WEDDELL, USM MODULAR FURNITURE

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Include both open shelving and doors for interest

Choose a mix of bold colours for a powerful look

Dress up white shelving with a citrus accent shade



EXPERT EYE 'The trend for using pops of colour is set to continue – although expect to see softer and less austere tones. The Pantone Colours of 2016 – Rose Quartz and Serenity Blue – are an excellent contrast to the taupes we are used to'

SIMON TCHERNIAK, NEVILLE JOHNSON



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SITTING PRETTY

Having created a home that is the height of good taste, the Harris family have no intention of leaving

FEATURE VIVIENNE AYERS | PHOTOGRAPHY POLLY ELTES



DINING ROOM

Elegant furniture sets the tone of the Harris' sociable space. Maison sells glazed armoires, from £895. For a similar dining table try the Regent, £599, John Lewis

UNIQUE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Georgian village house

LOCATION Buckinghamshire

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner, family room, dining room, snug, five bedrooms (one en suite), two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2003

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before this, we rented several places in the area,' says Gabrielle.



SITTING ROOM

Opulent fabrics and an upholstered ottoman create a resplendent feel.

For a similar settee try the Caravaggio, from £1,999, Sofa Workshop. Wonderful window mirror, £229, Decorative Mirrors Online

Gabrielle Harris admits her heart ruled her head when she first viewed her whitewashed period house in Buckinghamshire. 'I fell in love with it the second I saw it,' she says.

'My husband Simon and I had been renting previously and when we started looking to buy, we were open to anything,' she says. 'Of all the properties we viewed, this was by far and away the best house for the money. Our minds were finally made up when we had dinner at the local pub, conveniently sited just across the road.'

A retired colonel and his wife had lived in the house for 30 years. 'They were a stylish pair so the interior was in a very good state,' says Gabrielle. 'The decor was period style but we wanted to put our own stamp on it.'

As if moving house wasn't stressful enough, Gabrielle and Simon got married just two weeks before they were due to

complete. 'The wedding was the last thing on my mind because of the house!' she says. She and Simon got back from their honeymoon and moved in the following week.

Before this, they had the interior painted white throughout and new carpets laid. 'We wanted to start with a blank canvas,' explains Gabrielle. Once the couple had lived in it for a while and worked out what they wanted to do, they built a new kitchen and converted the previous one into a garden room.

They also added an en-suite bathroom and dressing room to the master bedroom, installed two new bathrooms and converted the attic into a playroom. Also, a double-storey garage was built with a study on top. Because of the mess and dust, the family moved out for a while and lived with Simon's father.

When it came to the interior, Gabrielle was initially quite traditional in her tastes but as time went on, she grew to love the idea of

wallpaper and muted colours. 'I adore Farrow & Ball paints and keep coming back to them,' she says. 'The interior is forever changing. I could be sitting watching TV and decide to paint a wall, and if I have the paint I'll do it. Luckily, Simon is very easygoing about it.'

Gabrielle's signature look is eclectic with some modern and some old pieces, including elegant French-style painted furniture. 'Some of it has come from France, where we used to have a house,' she says. 'I don't buy from high-street retailers and prefer to source pieces – some are inherited and some are from auction. I love an individual style – it's always a good idea to mix in antiques because then no-one else has the same look.'

The surroundings, as well as the interior, suit the family perfectly. 'We love it here and there's lots of country walks nearby. We have the best of both worlds as it's accessible to London – it's country but not cut off.' 25



KITCHEN-DINER
Painted furniture, finds from France and shuttered windows create an elegant scheme.

Table, find similar at Maison. Rochelle dining chairs, £249, Made. Walls painted in Strong White estate emulsion, £39.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

FAVOURITE ASPECT *'I love the house's character – it has sloping floors and ceilings and nothing's on a level. It's irreplaceable and totally a one-off'*



MASTER BEDROOM
A large mirror maximises light and increases the feeling of space.

For a similar super king-size divan try the Eloise, from £1,100, Big Bed Company. Decorative French mirror, price on application, Overmantels



MASTER EN SUITE
The 'his and hers' arrangement looks perfect in this space

Bell countertop washbasins, £570 each, CP Hart

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Detached 1850s former priest's house

LOCATION Montreuil, Northwest France

ROOMS Sitting room, dining room, kitchen-diner, study, utility, three bedrooms, three bathrooms

PURCHASED 2012

PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'We used to run a B&B in a manor house nearby,' says Jennifer.

HOLY ORDER

A former church property in France that needed a loving touch proved an irresistible restoration challenge for Jennifer and Helmut Gorlich

FEATURE JOHANNA THORNYCROFT | **PHOTOGRAPHY** ANDREAS VON EINSEIDEL

SITTING ROOM

A grey palette, dark furniture and white accents are the unifying colours in here.

Harvest Stripe 6 is similar to the chair fabric, £39.50m, Ian Mankin. Walls painted in Lamp Room Gray estate emulsion, £39.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Chandelier, £325, Nicky Cornell





DINING ROOM

The couple's much-loved 18th-century oak table and Yorkshshire chairs fitted here perfectly. Similar tables, from £1,000, Country Oak Antiques. For Georgian dolls houses, try Julie Anns Dolls Houses, from £120



KITCHEN - DINER

This compact layout with silestone worktops allows ample space for a breakfast table. Basket lampshade, £70, Leroy Merlin. Winchester breakfast table, £249, Pine Solutions. Harrogate chairs are a match, £215 each, Neptune



DINING ROOM

The painted cupboard was rescued by the couple from a pine shop in Austria, where it was about to be stripped. The Shimu Chinese classical Shanxi painted cabinet is comparable, £875, WorldStores



Jennifer and Helmut Gorlich may have recently downsized, but their smart red-brick village house is hardly of cottage proportions.

The couple, who ran a hotel in England before moving to France, first restored a classic manoir in the north of France, transforming it into a luxury B&B. They settled easily into their new life, becoming immersed in the local community and exploring the country.

After selling this place, the couple then fell for the charms of a former priest's house in the same area of the country. Its location, just a short drive from the French port of Calais, meant the pair were ideally placed to commute easily between France and the UK.

'Very soon we were focusing all our energy on this property, which required a serious amount of restoration.'

Having gone through many guises, latterly as student accommodation, the house was full of cloakrooms and basins,

partitions and long-outmoded services. The pretty, traditional staircase and old tile floors were intact but virtually everything else needed to be replaced during the eight-month building project.

'An elderly neighbour came to visit when we had finished the work and was amazed to find we had returned the house to its original layout,' says Jennifer. 'She said it seemed like time had stood still, which we took as a compliment. We tried to restore a sense of authenticity to the place, although, of course, the kitchen has been updated.' In fact, this room was the most difficult to get right, with a fireplace in the middle and a door and large window at either end, leaving little wall space for cupboards. But the couple got round the issue by mixing built-in cabinetry and freestanding pieces.

'Very early on I was attracted to all-cream and off-white rooms,' says Jennifer. 'I love to create calm spaces against neutral white or pale grey walls, relying on the colour, texture and occasionally the pattern of the contents

and fabrics to add personality.' There is character in abundance, from antique furniture and china to hand-stitched samplers and canine paintings, which grace the staircase. 'Fortunately, we had a very large house from which to choose the pieces we have here,' says Jennifer. Some pieces were bought specially, including a pair of wood and cane chairs that the couple found at an English country fair and painted grey. 'Funnily enough, they originally came from a French hotel,' muses Jennifer. 'Many of our favourite things have crossed the Channel more than once.'

The kitchen, a sunny open-plan space with an old bread oven still embedded in the fireplace, leads directly to a broad, brick-paved terrace running across the back of the house. Upstairs, the master bedroom and guest room overlook the elegant garden, and the quiet village with its ancient abbey opposite means guests are undisturbed. Thanks to Jennifer and Helmut, this historic house is once again a welcoming home. 25



HALL
An old Oriental rug softens the terracotta floor tiles. Rug, £350, Liberty. White table lamp and shade, £150, Ensor Interior Design



GUEST BEDROOM
Jennifer remade a pair of Swedish block print curtains to fit here. Seagrass matting, £26m, Crucial Trading

BEST BUY *'We found the guest room furniture at a tiny shop, took them home and painted each piece the same colour to pull it all together'*

MASTER BEDROOM

A classic Victorian brass bed is the focal point of this red and white space.

Similar bed from £950, A Barn Full of Brass Beds. Ticking fabric for curtains, Peony ticking 2 fabric is similar to these curtains, £24.50m, Ian Mankin. For antique samplers on the wall, try Witney Antiques, price on request





KITCHEN

Distressed cream cabinetry topped with granite worktops creates a rustic country feel.

Cabinets painted in Wimborne White estate eggshell, £55 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



DINING AREA

The table, chairs and lighting complement the traditional atmosphere of the house.

Double and triple French ceramic rise-and-fall light from £753, Holloways of Ludlow, is a close match. Try the Bramley carver chairs, £275 each, and dining table, £1,000, both Laura Ashley

NEW START

Craving a calm and restful retreat in Ireland, Renate Suso found the perfect coastal hideaway

FEATURE PENNY CRAWFORD-COLLINS

PHOTOGRAPHY PHILIP LAUTERBACH

Having spent many happy times visiting their daughter in Ireland, Renate Suso and her late husband wanted to relocate there. 'We were living in south Germany, near Lake Constance, in a house with magnificent views of the lake and the Swiss Alps,' she explains. 'So we were keen to find a setting with equally magical views. When my daughter sent me details of a cottage on the Sheep's Head peninsula in West Cork, I jumped at the chance to view it, as I knew the area and its spectacular coastline.'

The pretty cottage is approached via an extremely narrow mountain lane, and it's not hard to see why Renate fell for this idyllic setting. 'Before I even saw the cottage itself I was seduced by the uninterrupted views,' she says. 'The area had a wonderfully calm feel.' Having the countryside and the sea on the doorstep was an important factor in the couple's decision to buy the cottage. It had everything they wanted, needed very little work, and had been newly built. 'It



NEW-BUILD



SITTING ROOM

Neutral furnishings keep the look in here light and bright.

Ektorp armchairs, from £230 each; Vitten high-pile rug, £80, both Ikea, would suit this space. For custom-made bookcases with plinth, from £233, try Jali



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Stone cottage, built in 1998

LOCATION West Cork

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, mezzanine, cloakroom, three bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom

PURCHASED 1999

PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'We lived in a large modern house in Germany,' says Renate.



MASTER BEDROOM
Lime-washed ceilings and soft hues give this room a restful atmosphere.

Canterbury bed, £399, Feather & Black, is a close match. Albany biscuit quilt, £275, for a double, The White Company, would be just as cosy. For antique French bedside tables, from £175, try The French Depot



BATHROOM
Period-style fixtures give this room old-fashioned charm.

The Camberley basin and pedestal have this look, £200, Victoria Plum. Kalkgrund glass shelf, £15, Ikea, is similar.

DESIGN TIP *'Painting woodwork is a quick and easy way of updating or freshening up interiors'*

also had a modern heating system and was well insulated, plus the layout was perfect with a spacious kitchen, a good-sized sitting room and great views,' says Renate. 'I also loved the fact that although the property looked old, it was recently built and was full of character. The exterior is so charming, with lovely stone walls and pretty windows, while the interiors have a traditional feel with wooden floorboards, tongue-and-groove ceilings and fireplaces.'

With no structural work required, Renate turned her attention to the decor and furnishings. 'Although the house was nicely finished, it had a lot of yellow pine doors and ceilings so I decided to paint them white and used a distressed paint effect on the doors.' When it came to the kitchen, Renate chose a Provence-style scheme. 'I painted the cabinets, giving them a slightly worn look,' she says. 'Then I sourced traditional-style handles for that country feel I was after.' In the sitting room, Renate had shelves fitted in the alcoves and around the windows. 'I got a local carpenter to make them up in cherry wood so they would match the fireplace that was already there,' she says.

Renate took her time to furnish the property. 'I wanted the house to be comfortable and practical with a mix of old and new,' she says. 'I enjoy recycling things and believe you don't have to spend a huge amount of money, you just have to be a bit patient. Besides, it was worth all the hard work to be able to live in such a haven of tranquillity, full of wildlife and wonderful walks. I'm so glad we moved here.'

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SITTING ROOM

Sarah's choice of black for the deep skirting boards and imposing fire surround creates an element of drama.

Walls painted in French Grey; skirtings painted in Lamp Black, both intelligent matt emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene. Axel sofa, price on request, Viaduct



REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached Grade II listed country house

LOCATION

Devon

ROOMS

Hall, sitting room, library, family room, kitchen-diner, utility room, cocktail room, cloakroom, six bedrooms (three en suite), bathroom

PURCHASED

2013

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We rented a family house nearby for a while,' says Sarah.

CLEARLY SPECIAL

A 21st-century glazed extension marked a new chapter for Sarah and Jasper Westaway's remodelled period home

FEATURE ANNABELLE GRUNDY | PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN POOLE



FAMILY ROOM
This space in the extension can be closed by a sliding door when required. Simyra limestone flooring, £123.54sq m, Devon Stone. Cushions, £12 each, Habitat. Classic World Map mural wallpaper, £23.50sq m, Murals Wallpaper



DINING AREA
The couple have eclectic tastes, blending modern pieces with old, and mixing styles and materials. The Homer table is comparable, £695; Geronimo white chairs are a match, £290 per pair, both Loaf



COCKTAIL ROOM
Sarah and Jasper have transformed this former scullery in the oldest part of the house, into a dark, atmospheric 'cocktail lab'. Bespoke copper bar, price on request, Touch Design Group. Walls painted in Lamp Black intelligent matt emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene

After successful careers in London and then travelling for a year with their two children, Sarah and Jasper Westaway were ready to put down some roots. Both had grown up in Devon and were keen to settle near their families. 'We had no style of house in mind,' says Sarah, 'but we wanted a place we could make our mark on and where Zac, now 9, and Stella, 7, could run about freely.'

When they arrived at a period property, set in spacious grounds on the edge of Budleigh Salterton, Sarah knew the search was over. 'As we came up the drive and saw the tall trees and double-fronted house at the top, I felt a tingle,' she says, 'I knew it was the one.'

A commanding Victorian frontage had been grafted onto a smaller, Georgian house. A modest cob building had been added at the back. The house had been refurbished, but the interior was dated and its unusual

history was reflected in a complicated layout. 'It was a fairly unassuming house that had gradually grown to become quite imposing,' says Sarah. 'There were doors and steps all over the place and when I first walked around, I felt hopelessly lost. The quirkiness appealed, but it needed a little streamlining.'

The pair spent the first year getting acquainted with their new home and learning how to enhance it. Sarah used the time to gather ideas and images. 'It was a beautiful building, and while we wanted to alter parts, we didn't want to mess about with it too much.'

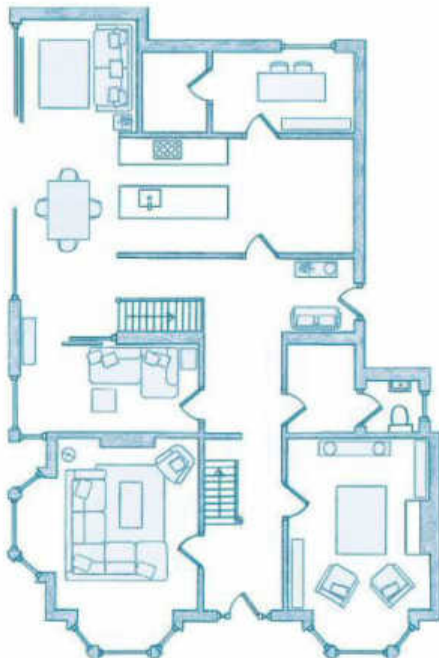
Although the couple had little experience of building work, they spent time sourcing materials and assembling a team of specialists to deliver the changes they planned. Plumbing and heating was upgraded and new flooring and decor was introduced in every room. Upstairs, the layout was simplified, while remodelling downstairs improved

KITCHEN

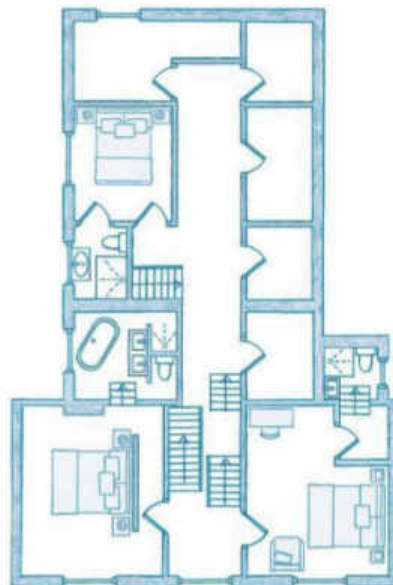
Sarah took inspiration for the kitchen from a photograph she found, where dark wood furniture was combined with white marble. Bespoke smoked oak kitchen, price on request, Touch Design Group. Decode Vessel P Bronze pendant lights, £225 each, Nest

INSPIRATION *'I went to a one-day workshop with interior designer Abigail Ahern, which gave me the confidence to use some quite dark, dramatic colours'*

AFTER



GROUND FLOOR

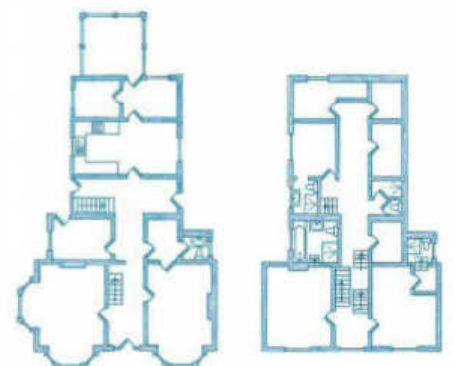


FIRST FLOOR

MAKING THE SPACE WORK

Prior to remodelling, the layout was jumbled, and didn't suit the way the family wanted to live. 'Plan a layout by thinking about how you use the space,' says Sarah. 'Our kitchen was designed around the flow of movement – bringing food from the work area to the table, and then taking plates back to the sink.'

BEFORE





MASTER BEDROOM

A false wall was added, shrinking the space, bringing the bed into the centre, and creating a neat passage through to the rear en suite.

Matthew Hilton Oscar bed, from £2,500, Cimmernann. Walls painted in French Grey intelligent matt emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Little Greene. Scion Mr Fox cushion, £40, John Lewis



MASTER EN SUITE

An unusual antique mirror given to the couple by Jasper's mother adds style and elegance to this smart sanctuary.

Ashton Bentley Zeus bath, price on request, Sapphire Spaces

DESIGN TIP *'Go with what you love and don't worry about sticking to any particular style. If you like it, it will work'*

the flow. A modern kitchen replaced the existing one, and a large glass extension created a spacious dining area and family room with sea views beyond the garden.

While the work was carried out, the family stayed in a guest cottage in the grounds. Being on site to answer any questions and make decisions proved extremely useful, and helped the project progress smoothly. 'The only issue was the glass for the extension, which was three months late,' says Sarah. 'But I had faith in our team and didn't get stressed.'

The spectacular new kitchen and light-filled extension form a T-shape and have become the heart of daily life for the family. The kitchen stylishly blends dark smoked oak and cool

grey lacquered finishes, while the glass structure divides effortlessly into seating, dining and family zones. A contemporary design contrasts with the front rooms, where high ceilings, deep skirting boards and vast, shuttered bay windows reveal their Victorian origins.

With building complete, Sarah was keen to unify the interior. 'The grey palette is a constant, and we've used modern and vintage feature lighting, limestone floors and elements of white marble throughout,' she says. 'Wherever you are, there's an echo of another room. It means that although the house is large, it's also harmonious. There's a lovely, friendly atmosphere here that we wouldn't change for the world.' 25

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A HOME WITH A VIEW

Horse lover Claire O'Donnell and her husband David created a magical feel inside and outside their thatched cottage

FEATURE PENNY BOTTING | PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT SANDERSON



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

16th-century thatched house

LOCATION Hampshire

ROOMS Sitting room, day room, kitchen, breakfast room, cloakroom, two bedrooms (both en suite), dressing room, annexe

PURCHASED 2010

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Our previous home was a 1930s farmhouse close by,' says Claire.





I

DESIGN TIP *'Don't be afraid to change the look of something with paint, but*



2

Claire O'Donnell and her husband David loved living in Hampshire but not their precise location. 'Our home was on quite a busy road, which wasn't ideal for the horses we had,' says Claire. 'So, when my daughter Phoebe planned to move out we thought it was time for us to relocate as well, to downsize and find somewhere that was a bit more rural.'

They hadn't been looking long, when they came to view this pretty house. 'The minute we saw the cottage, which is off a quiet road and has lovely views and a beautiful garden, I knew it would be our next home,' she says. David, on the other hand, wasn't convinced. 'The place was quite tired, plus he wasn't keen on the thatch,' says Claire. 'It certainly needed updating, which might have been one of the reasons no-one had snapped it up already, but that didn't worry me as I knew it would work for us.'

'Fortunately, David came round when I showed him the outbuildings and spoke to master thatcher Simon Richards who reassured us about the benefits of a re-thatch. After a few weeks of paperwork, the house was ours.'

Although the property was listed, Claire and David were able to maximise its potential by making a few



always prepare the surface well first. It makes such a difference to the overall look'

essential changes. 'We removed a wall to connect the bedroom to the dressing room, updated the wiring and plumbing, added new bathrooms and installed an Aga,' says Claire. 'Essentially, we shook up the whole place.'

When it came to decorating, Claire loved what the previous owners had already done, but knew that the schemes needed to be updated. 'I wanted to create a different mood in each room of the house, but also a sense of continuity,' she says, 'so I chose the same paint shade throughout. It sounds simple, but because I wanted to get the tone just right, coming to the decision to use Lime White by Farrow & Ball took a surprisingly long time. But I now have a colour with a lovely green tint, that

1 KITCHEN

'I always love cooking at the Aga while friends are gathered around the island,' says Claire.

For a similar Murano glass chandelier, £1,400, try the Italian Lighting Centre. Oyster mosaic freshwater tiles, £199.47sq m, Fired Earth

Large rattan log basket, £60, Garden Trading, is a match

3 BREAKFAST ROOM

'The oak table was made for us from a tree that came down in the great storm of 1987,' says Claire.

Long-stem white vase, £45, LSA International, has a similar style

2 SITTING ROOM

Roxy the Jack Russell enjoys the woodburning stove that Claire and David inherited.

Blanket trunk in red lacquer, £445, Shimu, has the same look.

4 DAY ROOM

A favourite old sofa was given a new lease of life.

The antique sofa was re-covered in Palazzo Fuchsia, £67m, Romo





I

DESIGN TIP *'When choosing a colour scheme, start with inspiration from a favourite item'*



2



3

looks subtly different as it reacts to the changing amounts of natural light in each room.'

Claire gets inspiration from a range of sources, including when she's driving all round the country with her showjumping son, Miles. 'If I see an interiors shop, I'll often park the lorry and leap out, leaving the horses and my son to their own devices for a few minutes!'

This enthusiasm has certainly paid off and Claire now has a delightful home. 'The house is quite quirky with the kitchen at the centre, but this makes it the hub of the home,' she says. 'Friends and family are drawn to the island as I'm cooking and it's ideal for a natter with a glass of wine.'

'I knew this place could be wonderful, and it is,' says Claire. 'We have views from all points of the compass, the sunsets are amazing and it feels magical.'

I BEDROOM
'This is my sanctuary. It's a lovely place to read or even work,' says Claire.

Coco bed, from £825 for a double, Loaf. Grey armchair, £700, La Maison

2 BATHROOM
'I love retreating here with a glass of wine and indulging in a bubble bath,' says Claire.
The Burlington-Buckingham

freestanding slipper tub with white traditional legs is a match, £552, Victorian Plumbing

3 CLOAKROOM
The secret door is made from a panel the previous owners used as a drinks cupboard.
For similar secret doors, from £350, try Manor Bindery. Walls in Radicchio and Book Room Red estate emulsion, both £39.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

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PATIENT APPROACH



INSPIRING

I



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Country house, built in 1850

LOCATION Berkshire

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen, study, garden room, playroom, four bedrooms, bathroom

PURCHASED 2007

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We used to live in a shared house in Italy before this,' says Catherine.



Creating the oft-longed-for 'forever family home' that's cosy and full of personality takes more than just a good eye for pattern and colour, though artist Catherine

Ingleby certainly has that in spades. In the Berkshire home she shares with husband Peter, and their children Hugh, 6, and Serena, 4, she demonstrates her passion for painterly hues, pretty florals and a variety of motifs.

'Being an artist, I've never been a huge fan of neutral decor,' says Catherine. 'I love using strong colours, such as the ochre in the

kitchen – it gives the room warmth and I can enjoy it even when I'm in my studio at the end of the garden. The space looks so vibrant and welcoming and I look forward to getting back to the house after working all day.'

Another bold shade can be found in the bathroom, where Catherine was inspired by a John Brenton painting. 'I picked out the blue from the seascape,' she says, 'and the room just evolved from there with a fish-themed blind that I made to tie in with the mood.'

However, above and beyond her innate ability to choose colours that complement the couple's treasured belongings, is Catherine's

Catherine Ingleby proves that time and patience are key for a successful renovation

FEATURE NAOMI JONES | PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT SANDERSON



2



3

patience and stoicism. And these qualities certainly come in handy when renovating a period property on a budget.

'We bought this house almost a decade ago when we began thinking about starting a family,' says Catherine. 'We appreciated the proportions of its architecture and the spacious outbuildings, where I could paint and frame. But although the property was structurally sound, it still needed a lot of updating, so we knew we'd have to live with most of its shortcomings for a few years until we had the funds to bring it back to life, room by room. I've had to learn quite a few new

skills along the way, such as curtain making, to stretch our resources as much as we could.'

Before the pair could even think about decorating – a process that they've started, but not yet completed – or extending the small kitchen, there was a lot of unseen work to be carried out. 'For the first few years we battled with the heating and plumbing,' recalls Catherine. 'One winter, the heating and hot water was intermittent at best. It's sorted now but there's always an anxious moment when the weather changes and it's time to turn it on.'

During this early period, the couple did insist on completing one room. 'Peter and

1 SITTING ROOM Patterns bring life to this space.

Wall paint, Archive estate emulsion, £39.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. *Espirito Gitano* painting, £3,995, Catherine Ingleby

2 KITCHEN
This new layout gives more space. Wall paint, Sudbury Yellow modern emulsion, £43.50

per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Splashback in Buttercup Blue wallpaper, £22m, Louise Body

3 DINING AREA
Ceiling pendants add character. Tumbled travertine floor, £30sq m, Floors of Stone. Farmhouse table and six chairs, £865, Pine Solutions, are a good match

DESIGN TIP *'Don't worry about making a "Pinterest perfect" home – make it yours'*



I are both over six foot tall,' says Catherine, 'and the bath was just too small. There was no shower, either, so we had to prioritise making a bathroom that would work for us.'

Renovating the house gradually and adopting a frugal approach does have its benefits, though. 'I want our home to be somewhere the children can tear around in, and play with the dogs without feeling anxious. If we drop a glass of red wine, it's the sign of a good night, not the end of the world.'

'There are things we want to change when we have time and money,' adds Catherine, 'like removing the green carpet, swirly plaster and woodchip paper in various rooms. But these are minor details – this is already the fantastic family home we always knew it could be.'

1 BEDROOM Pale colours throughout help give this room a fresh feel.

Walls painted in Dayroom Yellow estate emulsion, £39.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. *Quiron* painting above bed, £950; *Rodeo Grey* painting above fire, £1,500, both by Catherine Ingleby. Helena Springfield Georgiana bedding, from £70 for a double, Bedeck, is comparable

2 EN SUITE A roll-top by the window makes the most of the natural light.

Salisbury slipper bath, £549, Bathstore, would work well here. Walls painted in Stone Blue modern emulsion, £43.50 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Malva Blue rug by Swedy, from £69, Wayfair, has this look. Blind fabric similar to Vintage Crab, £17.95 per yard, Zazzle

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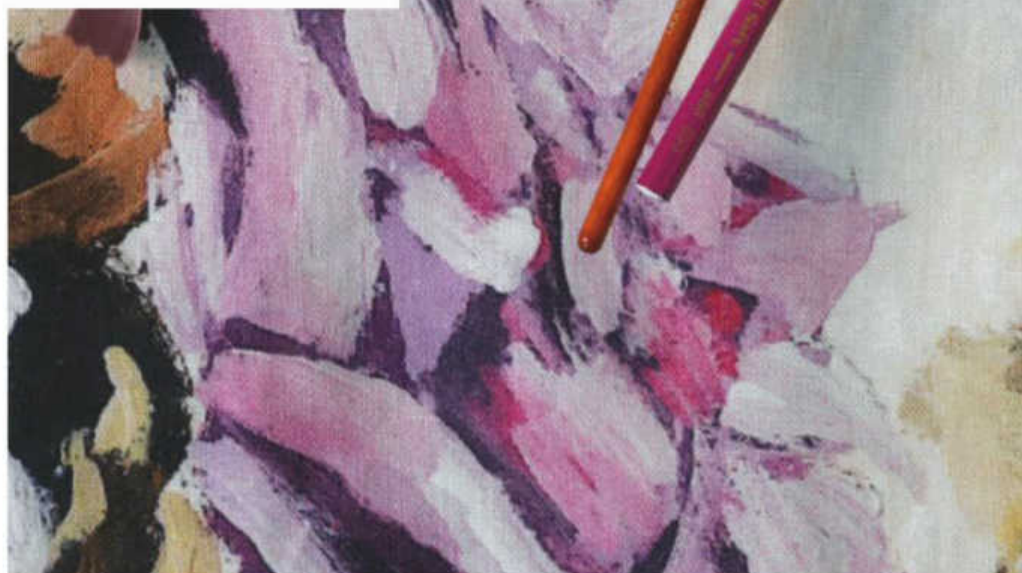
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SITTING ROOM

This light, simply furnished scheme is enlivened by bright pink accents.

The Clarence Big Brother chrome clear acrylic chandelier, £180, Glo.uk, is near-identical. Avana sofa, £3,500; Marlene armchair, £1,300, both Natuzzi. Graham and Green Grey Suzani pouffe, £65; its Bath button footstool, £295, has this look



OLD FOR NEW

*Amit and Meera Unadkat
reworked a small, dated
apartment into a spacious,
modern family home*

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH

REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Garden

flat in a Victorian conversion

LOCATION London

ROOMS Sitting room,
kitchen-diner, three bedrooms
(one en suite), bathroom

PURCHASED 2011

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'This place is our first home
together,' says Amit.



KITCHEN-DINER

'We try to eat together as often as we can, so we opted to site the dining area here, away from the distraction of the TV,' says Amit.

Extension designed by Belsize Architects (belsizearchitects.com). Winchester white with black leather bar stool, £72.50 for two, Amazon, is a match



When Amit Unadkat first saw his garden flat, there didn't seem to be a great deal in its favour. Cramped and dated, it formed part of a Victorian four-storey property on a plot punctuated by four garages running in zigzags along one side. But the apartment had attractive high ceilings and large windows, and was located in a pretty, leafy part of northwest London.

'I'd been looking a while and dropped in to view this place on the way to my friend's wedding,' says Amit. Little did he know that by the time the purchase was complete and the renovations drawn up, he'd be planning his own nuptials. 'I bought the flat and got engaged to Meera,' he explains. 'So what began as a project for me turned into the planning of a family home for the two of us.'

Expert assistance

The couple, both property lawyers, looked at how they could extend sensitively on such an awkwardly shaped site. The bonus was that the apartment included one of the garages, which Amit decided to sell to a neighbour to part-fund the renovation. 'As the flat is in a conservation area, we sought local expertise

and worked with Shahriar Nasser of Belsize Architects, who could maximise the plot's potential, while also satisfying the planning office,' says Amit. The result was an ingenious layout that nearly doubled the flat's footprint.

Improved layout

Large reception rooms at the front of the property were retained as a sitting room and master bedroom, but the rear was completely reworked. A rudimentary conservatory was demolished and replaced with a three-sided, pitched-roof extension, inspired by the complex geometry of the plot. The kitchen and dining area, which straddles the boundary between the old and new structures, was remodelled, and a bathroom and third bedroom was incorporated into the apartment's new floor plan, too.

'We knew that architecturally interesting extensions are more likely to be approved,' says Amit. 'Apart from tweaking a few details, such as the pitch of the roof, the process was thankfully a smooth one.'

Inside, period features such as plaster cornices and window shutters have been beautifully restored, while grey-stained oak flooring runs throughout, providing cohesion

between old and newer elements. 'Meera's input was invaluable,' says Amit. 'She focused on two details that I had overlooked: adequate storage and a practical kitchen layout.' As a result, the flat is full of hidden storage, while the kitchen has become a place where the family, which now includes son Aarav, 1, spend most of their time.

Finishing touches

Decorated predominantly in white, with vibrant accent colours, the flat exudes a serene atmosphere, complemented by simple furnishings and plenty of light from unadorned windows and skylights. 'Neither of us major in interior design, but our look has come together naturally,' reflects Amit. 'We opted for simple lines, touches of colour and pattern, and a few striking light fittings to accentuate period features.'

Once the work was complete, the couple were finally free to enjoy family life. 'I spent the first six months of our marriage living out of a suitcase at my sister-in-law's place while works were carried out here,' recalls Amit. 'It wasn't a very auspicious start, but our home has more than made up for that, giving us a huge amount of happiness.'

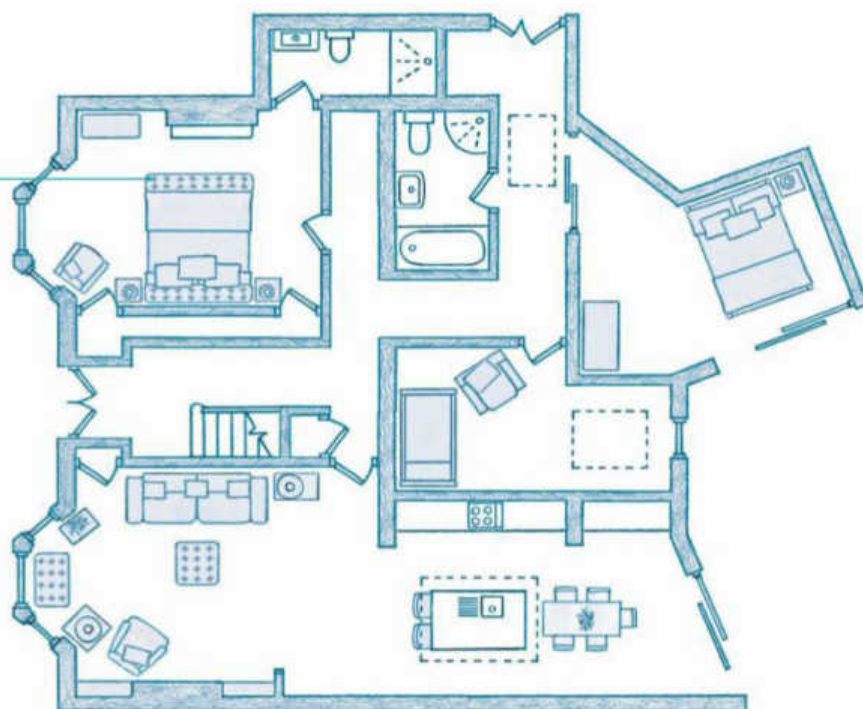
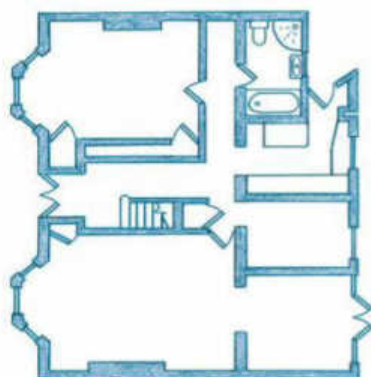
DECORATING ADVICE *'Pick a great floor and simple wall colours, and then*

AFTER

MAXIMISING POTENTIAL

Extending the oddly shaped property meant careful consideration by the couple and their architect, to create a more spacious, family-friendly interior. The master bedroom now has an en suite, an extra bedroom was added and there's enough space in the kitchen to accommodate a relaxed dining area.

BEFORE



GROUND FLOOR



MASTER BEDROOM

Generous storage built discreetly into the walls allows for a clean, clutter-free look.

The Benji buttoned bed in Fawn clever velvet, £1,425, Loaf, is similar. Askvoll bedside drawers, £29 each, Ikea. Fly armchair, £1,480, BoConcept. Cushions from a selection at West Elm

whatever furniture you choose will look good – you don't need to overthink it'



AARAV'S BEDROOM

An eye-catching and educational wallcovering injects colour and fun into this sweet space.

ABC You wallpaper, £30sq m, Mr Perswall. Walls painted in Chalky Downs emulsion 6, £24.49 per 2.5 litres, Dulux



BATHROOM

Large-format tiles and mirrored surfaces create the illusion of more space.

Meteor Grigio Perla Naturale wall tiles, £39.50m; Meteor Grigio Naturale floor tiles, £39.50m, both Tower Ceramics. Try the Roper Rhodes Conduct illuminated double bathroom cabinet, £240, John Lewis

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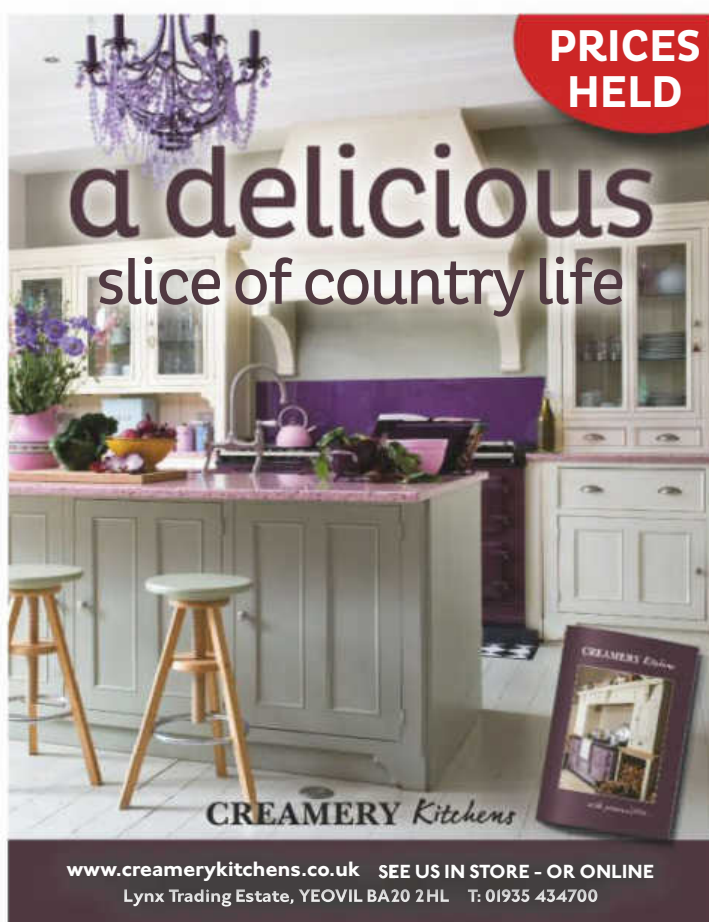


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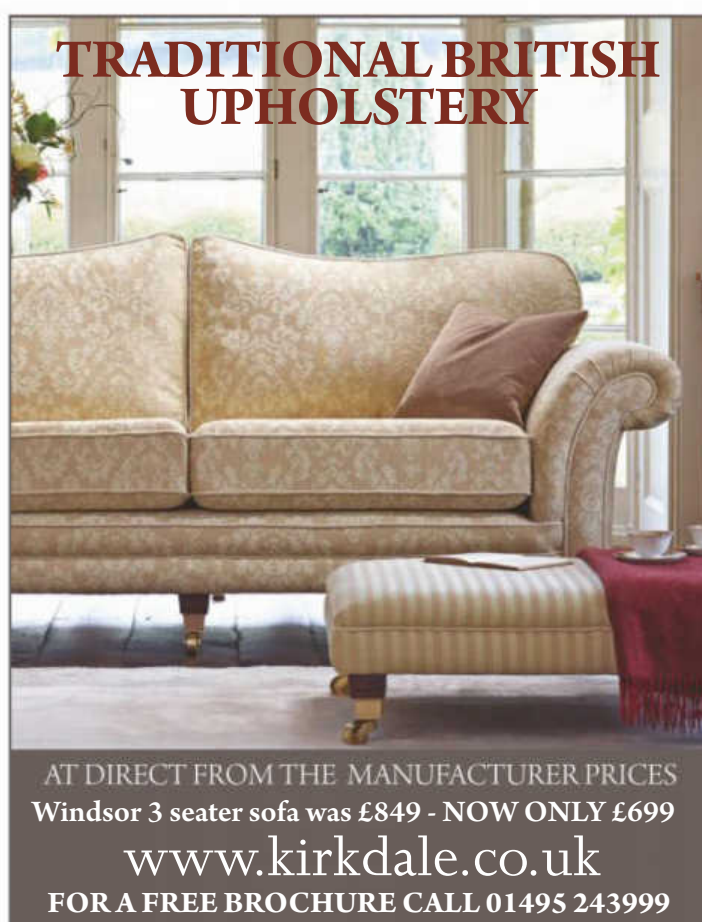


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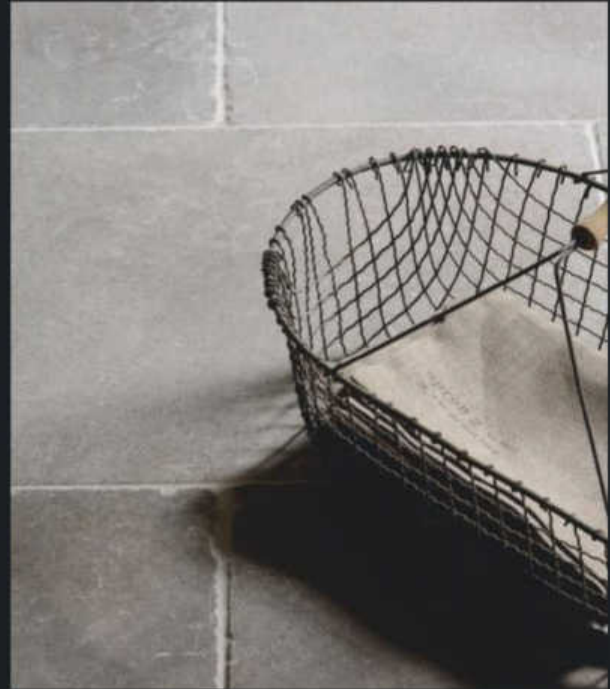
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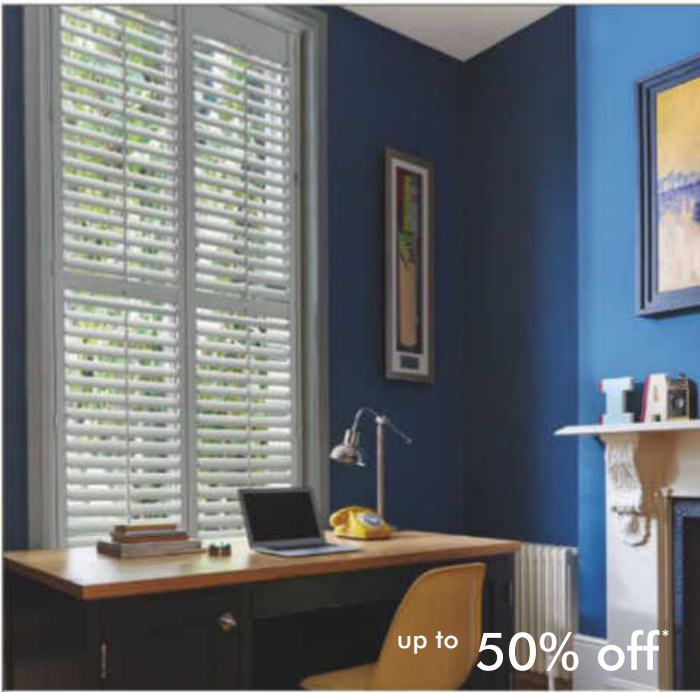


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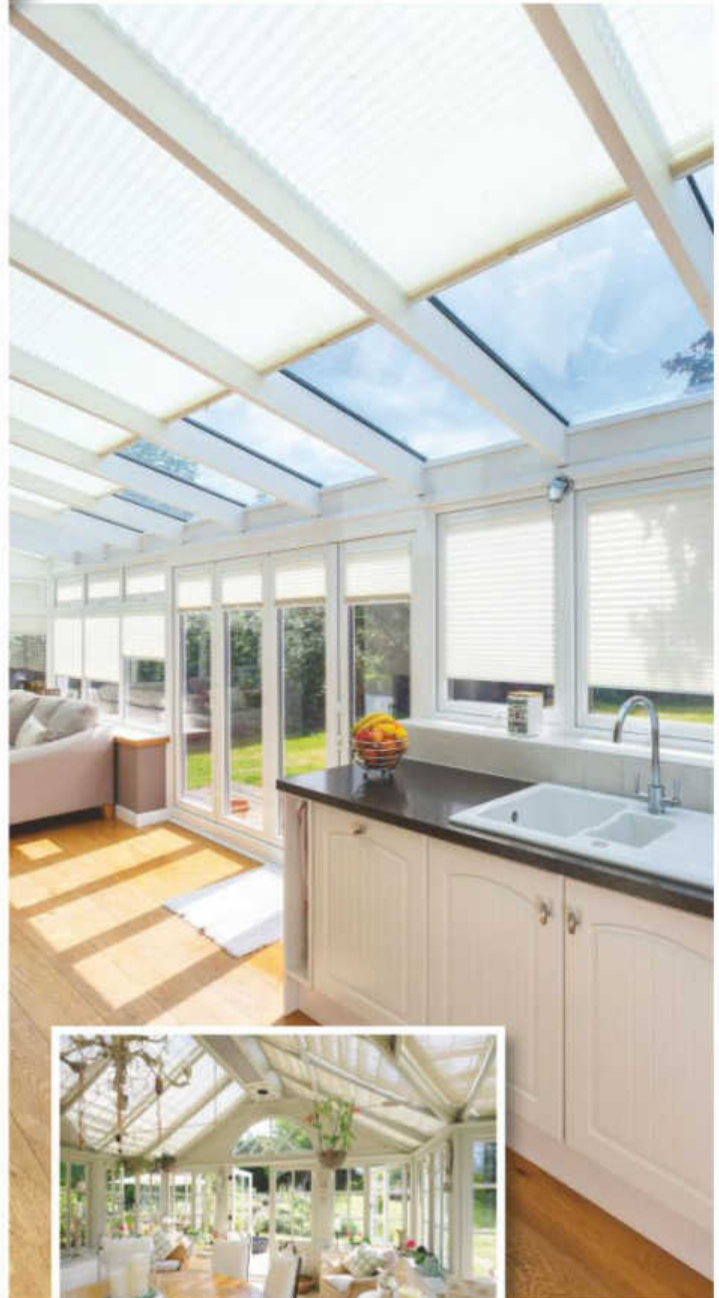
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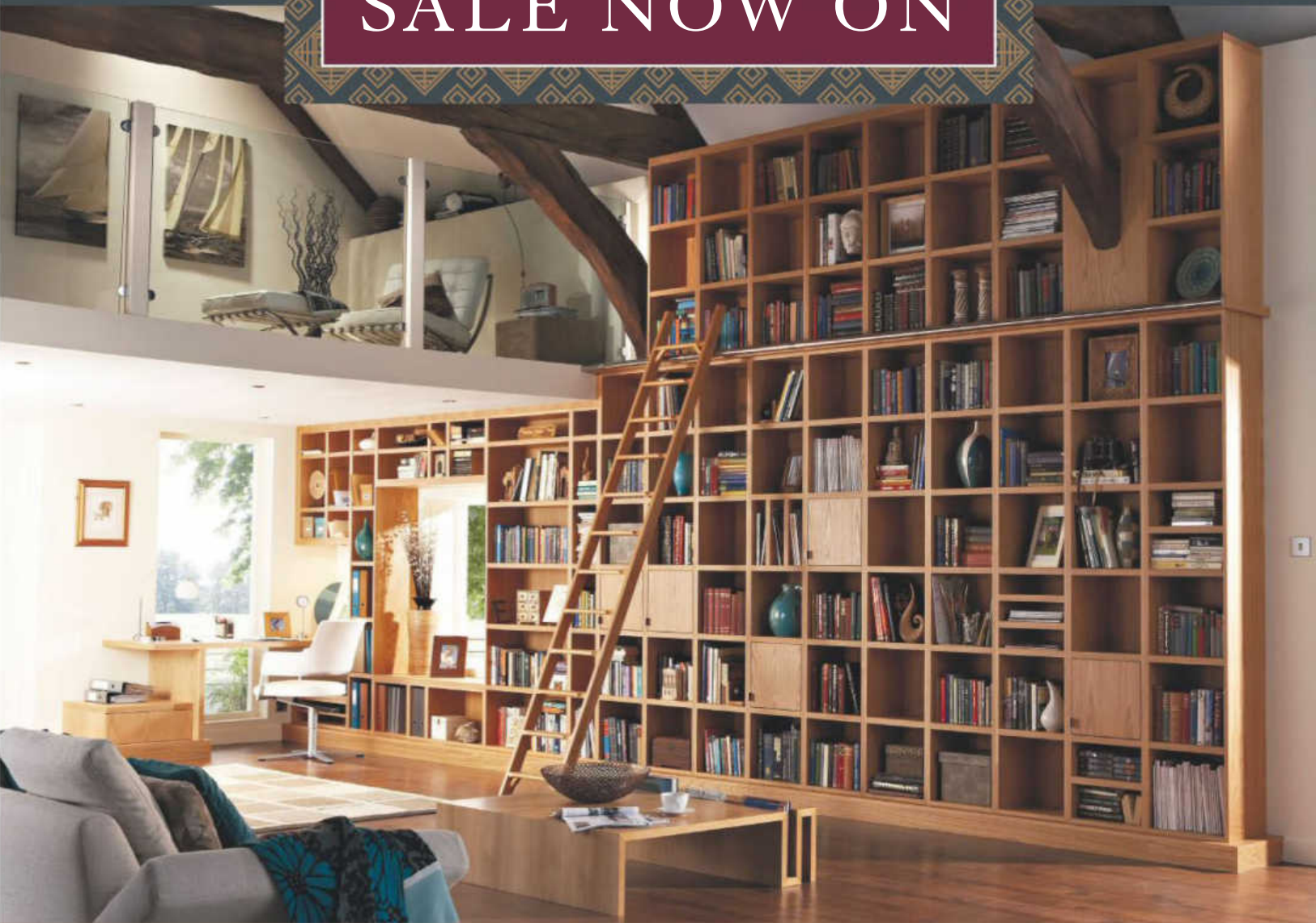
cushions in an array of white, grey and yellow patterns help the space feel cosy and inviting. The neutral beige sofa lets this colourful display keep all the attention, while a handful of other accessories in pops of lemon plus a floral arrangement help bring everything together. To finish off the design, the stylish glass coffee table, with its edgy black structure, breaks up the look for a slightly contemporary touch. 25

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